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The National Congress: Its Evolution

A. S. RAJAM

THE SONS OF INDIA, LTD
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1918

DEDICATED

TO

Mrs. Sarojini Naidu

AS

A MARK OF LOVE AND ADMIRATION

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The National Congress

CHAPTER I

The Genesis of the National Movement

I

“The sources of the noblest rivers which spread fertility over Continents and carry richly laden fleets to the sea are to be sought in wild and barren tracts, incorrectly laid down in maps and rarely explored by travellers.” These are the famous words with which Lord Macaulay commenced his description of the beginnings of the English Constitution. Writing of the genesis of political life in India, one is confronted with an initial difficulty. The exact beginnings are hard to determine. The scantiness of the material makes accurate correlation of details well-nigh impossible. Much of the information which might help a continuous and consistent presentation is lost in piles of forgotten correspondence, or in memories of men now no more. Such records and evidences as are easily accessible relate only to particular parts of this extensive country. Other parts do not seem to have had much of history relevant to our purpose, though they are found at later stages to flow into and commingle with the main National stream. The writer has also the more delicate task of sifting the accuracy and authenticity of accounts given

of the original germs of the modern political movement by writers, who yet live with us and form an invaluable part of our public life. More puzzling is the situation to an acholite in politics, when the accounts of widely esteemed authors appear inconsistent. These difficulties and more remind the student of our National¹ movement of the consoling analogue of Lord Macaulay to which reference has been made. The present Chapter does not pretend to overcome the difficulties incidental to it. It only attempts to show the main currents of our earlier political life, and to bring events and institutions apparently unrelated under the general heading of a common inspiration.

Modern political life began distinctly with the activities of Raja Ram Mohan Roy of honoured memory. In fact, the entire National movement of India originated from him. He is the earliest and the greatest of our moderns. He was born in 1774 and was a stripling of an exceedingly thoughtful and original disposition, when the memorable trial of Warren Hastings was going on in England. He learnt Persian at home, Arabic at Patna and studied Hinduism and Samskrit Literature at Benares. While yet fifteen, he went to Tibet attracted by the religion of the place and returned "a heretic" to India. His observation of contemporary Hindu life, his study of Western religion and his knowledge of the pure Hinduism of ancient times made him rebel against the orthodoxy and the superstitions of his time. It is said that his spiritual revolution began while yet a boy of twelve,

when a near and beloved relation of his was burnt on the funeral pyre with the remains of her husband. Raja Ram Mohan had created many enemies by his outspokenness and culture, and he had often to go out armed and guarded. In 1814, he settled in Calcutta and drew round him a band of men with liberal ideas. He was a great champion of Western education. He started in 1819 the Hindu College, which is now the Presidency College, at Calcutta. English education, as pointed out by Principal James, began in India with Raja Ram Mohan Roy and not as commonly supposed with Lord Macaulay. The Raja organised a huge agitation against Sati and was the chief cause of its abolition by Lord William Bentinck. He went to England in 1830 on an errand from the Emperor of Delhi and distinguished himself by the valuable evidence he gave before the Board of Control. He died in 1833 at Bristol.

His importance for us is in the founding of the Brahma Samaj on the 20th August, 1828, at Calcutta. In January, 1830, the first Brahmo temple was opened. Brahmoism was the result of Western culture. The men of Raja Ram Mohan's generation were influenced deeply by the ideals of the French Revolution, which they learnt from their study of European history and literature. The revolution in European thought connected with the immortal name of Martin Luther had also its influence. The doctrine of individualism and of private judgment and the curse of priestcraft and of privileged orders were brought home

to the mind of educated India through the impact of the new culture and education. Raja Ram Mohan was the noblest result of this influence. His Brahmo Samaj embodied the newer influences by which it was inspired. It became growingly popular among the young men of Bengal and conversion to Brahmoism frequently meant alienation from friends and rupture of domestic relations, as exemplified in the life of Raja Ram Mohan himself and in those of Ananda Mohan Bose, Bipin Chandra Pal and others. The young men of Bengal who came under the light of Brahmoism thus broke, in many cases, from the discipline of the *Patria Potestas* which has ever been the strongest discipline in India, and exalted the ideal of freedom of conscience and of private judgment. In this way the Brahmo Samaj marked the first landmark of Indian freedom. For once the sense of emancipation is born within the human soul, it refuses to confine itself to any one division of life but pervades every nerve of our being and conquers its rights in every department of our life. And so it happened in Bengal, for the spirit of self-assertiveness, the courage to dare official powers and the passion for civic freedom came swiftly on the wake of the Brahmo Samaj.

As Sir Valentine Chirol has rightly remarked, the National movement began with religion, as four centuries earlier, the Maharatta confederacy came into being under the urge of religious inspiration. The Arya Samaj, also a religious

movement, founded in Bombay by Dayanand Saraswati in April, 1875, made even a greater contribution. The Brahmo Samaj was a little westernised and was connected with foreign doctrines. Raj Narain Bose tried his very best to relate it to the East, but his interpretations were personal and lacked scriptural authority. His defence of Hinduism had more the smack of an apologia than that of an authoritative exposition based on its inherent principles, and sanctioned by its highest authorities. Swami Dayanand, however, based it on the bed-rock of the Vedas. It was Hinduism pure and aggressive. Naturally, therefore, it fostered more pride in the country, and the feeling it fostered, of the purity and greatness of Hinduism was bound to have an encouraging and elevating effect on a people weighed down with a consciousness of their own inferiority.

The Theosophical Society, which was founded at New York in November, 1875, and established its headquarters at Adyar in June, 1882, was another contributory factor in our early National life. Col. Olcott's first lecture was delivered on the 23rd of March, 1877, at Bombay. Its contribution in those days lay chiefly on the death-blow it struck to the scepticism towards Hinduism of people influenced by western materialistic thought. Swami Dayanand had gone back to the Vedas and proved how great Hinduism was, and how little it stood in need of the apologetic expositions of Raj Narain Bose. Theosophy went further

and established the truth and greatness of beliefs considered fanciful or degrading and proclaimed the primacy of Hinduism over the pretensions of Science. It told the Indian people whose general life was yet one protracted passivity, that India was bound to realise and declare her mission to the world. "From every ruined temple, from every secret *Vihara*, from every lonely corridor cut in the heart of the mountains, comes a whispering voice which says: "Children, the Mother is not dead, *she only sleepeth*," said Col. Olcott in one of his early lectures. His first lecture was in his own words: "A stirring discourse on the majesty and sufficiency of eastern Scriptures, and an appeal to the sentiment of patriotic loyalty to the memory of their forefathers to stand by their old religions, giving up nothing until after its worthlessness had been proved by impartial study." When sentiments, such as these, were preached by European and American workers of unquestioned powers of intellect, they were sure to be effective with the Indian people in whom National self-consciousness was not yet fully born. The nationalistic emphasis of the Arya Samaj was thus strengthened still further by the Theosophical Society.

II

These religious movements laid the foundations of all our present political life. But there were during these days pure political organisations as well. The beginnings of political

agitation in India date as far back as 1849. It was then that a controversy was raging particularly in Bengal, over what were known in contemporary language as "Black acts". The purpose of these acts was more or less the same as that of the Ilbert Bill of about 30 years later. "European opinion" in India raised such a huge uproar against it that, just as thirty years later, the proposals had to be dropped. The leading men of Bengal, however, leagued themselves to support the measure, and the British Indian Association was started as a result about the year 1851. It consisted entirely of the landed magnates of Bengal, of men like Prasanna Kumar Tagore, Raja Digambar Mitter, Ram Gopal Ghosh, Dr. Rajendralal Mitra, Peary Chand Mitter, Harish Chandra Mukherji, stalwarts all of them, some eminent scholars, and the last the pioneer of independent journalism in India. At about the same time was started the Bombay Association under the leadership of Jaggonath Shankersett, the first non-official member of the Bombay Legislative Council, and the late Dr. Dadabhai Naoroji, the Grand Old Man of India. The Bombay Association acquired later on the valuable services of Sir Mangaldhas Natubhoy and Naoroji Furdonji. And Kristo Das Pal raised the B. I. Association into power in Bengal. It is significant that the first political body of India, the British Indian Association, was founded, manned and led by the landed aristocracy. It has maintained its existence usefully for

more than half a century. But the Bombay Association lasted only a decade. It was resuscitated in 1870 and well vitalised in 1873 by Naoroji Furdonji, but it became moribund very soon again. Madras also had some semblance of public life in the form of the "Madras Native Association". But it was not until the late Mr. G. Subramania Iyer came to the field, that the southern province had much of political life. The *Hindu* was started in 1878 chiefly by him, and it had the living support of the late Ananda Charlu, Rangiah Naidu, and Veeraraghava Chari. A little earlier was started in Poona, the Sarva Janik Sabha under the leadership of Krishnaji L. Nulkar and Sitaram Hari Chiplankar.

These were practically all the important bodies until the early years of the seventies of the last century. They had no definite common political creed, nor had they any constructive programme even of a provincial character. They were meant only to safeguard interests as they were attacked, and contented themselves with occasional criticisms of Government measures. But there were some other factors which added to the strength of our politics, such as it was, and what is more, the whole spirit of Bengal was slowly changing. The premier province of the country was fostering within its own limits some forces of National life and elements of National well-being, which were destined to play a remarkable part in the later history of India.

III

Of the other factors above alluded to, one was the Indian Press, and another, our early friends in England. The Indian Press, like the political clubs, was inspired by knowledge of the West. The earliest example of an Indian journal was the *Bengal Gazette* started in 1870 at Calcutta. The Indian Press was practically English up to the beginning of the 18th Century. The earliest Paper, purely Indian, was Raja Ram Mohan Roy's *Sambad Kaumudi*. It was a Bengali paper, and preceded Indo-English journalism. But it was mostly social and religious. Criticism of the Government was dangerous in those days and European editors were frequently deported to Europe for sharp criticism of the Company's administration. The official Censorship lasted down to 1835, when Sir Charles Metcalfe, one of the most liberal-minded of Indian Viceroy's, restored the freedom of the Press. The *Prabha-kar*, of Ishwar Chandra Gupta, was the first Vernacular paper which ventured political criticism, though it must be said, that the criticism of that paper was far from courageous and sure. Lord Canning passed a gagging Act in 1858, but that statesman never made an indiscriminate use of the weapon, though he could have done so with all reasonableness in those troublous days following the Mutiny. "The *Hindu Patriot*, the *Hurkura*, the *Indian Mirror*, the *Amrita Bazar Patrika* which was at first an Anglo-

Vernacular paper, the *Brahmo Public Opinion* which was subsequently incorporated with the *Bengalee*, the *Reis and Rayet*, the *Somprakash*, the *Nahabithakar*, the *Gulabh Samachar*, the *Sanjilavi*, and several others in Bengal; the *Rast Gofter*, the *Bombay Samachar*, the *Indu Prakash*, the *Jam-e-Jamshed*, the *Mahratta*, and latterly the *Dnyan Prakash*, and the *Kesari* in Bombay; the *Hindu*, the *Standard*, the *Swadeshamitran* in Madras, the *Herald* in Behar, the *Tribune* in Lahore, and the *Advocate* in Lucknow—became powerful instruments of political education for the people and exercised considerable influence over the public mind up to the eighties of the last century. In spite of all that was said and written or done against it, the growth and development of the Indian Press was almost phenomenal. So that in 1875 there were no less than 478 newspapers in the country, the bulk of which were conducted in the Vernacular languages and freely circulated broadcast throughout the country." (Ambika Charan Mozumdar: *Indian National Evolution*). The Anglo-Indian Press was of great value to the Indian Press. It was conducted in those days in a more liberal spirit and Indian editors seem to have learnt methods of journalistic political criticism from some of them. It is remarkable that Vernacular journalism should have preceded English journalism in India. The numerous papers had very great influence and popularity. It seems to have been a common sight in Bengal, crowds of people

literate and illiterate, gathering together and listening to some one reading the evening's paper. In 1878, however, the Vernacular Press suffered a serious set-back from the Vernacular Press Act of Lord Lytton. But the beneficent Viceroyalty of Lord Ripon restored its freedom, and the Press was allowed to at once create and voice forth the feeling of the country.

Political life in the early days was bound to be faltering and feeble. We may well wonder what course our National affairs should have taken, if some of the best and most responsible statesmen of England had not lent us their advocacy. They kept up the faith in the justice of the British people but for which British Empire in India would have had a more difficult and less glorious career. Earliest and foremost among those comes John Bright. Since the days of Burke, who was the greatest of all the English friends, India was privileged to enjoy. John Bright was the man who knew best "the countless millions, helpless and defenceless, deprived of their natural leaders and ancient chiefs, looking only with one small ray of hope to that omnipresent and irresistible power by which they have been subjected." Representing as he always did the highest statesmanship, he was keenly alive to the responsibility of England before God to the people of this country. It was with him "a solemn, sacred trust." Time and again, he impressed on the mind of the British Parliament and people the injustice of which his compatriots were guilty. The unscien-

tific system of taxation, the injustice of the salt tax, the negligence of irrigation, the recurrences of famine and pestilence, the poverty of the people, the want of steadiness of policy, the secrecy and the irresponsibility of the Government of India, all these were set forth with that passionate eloquence and that gift of generous indignation which accounted so much for his supremacy in English politics. It may not be generally known that he was the main inspirer of the Queen's Proclamation, which has been rightly considered by the Princes and peoples of India to be the Magna Carta of their liberties as members of the British Empire.

Henry Fawcett was another fair-minded and large-hearted Englishman. He was also keenly alive to the injustice done to the people of India. In 1868, he moved a resolution in the House of Commons for Simultaneous Examinations for the Civil Service in Calcutta, Bombay, Madras and London. He told his constituency of Brighton in 1832: "The most trumpery question ever brought before Parliament, a wrangle over the purchase of a picture, excited more interest than the welfare of one hundred and eighty millions of our Indian fellow-subjects." Fawcett protested against the custom of introducing the Indian Budget in the very end of a Session. The Financial Committee over which he presided was appointed at his instance in 1871. India valued his services rendered in the face of overwhelming odds. In 1872, a monster meeting at Calcutta voted an address to him conveying India's gratitude, and

when in 1874, Fawcett lost his seat at Brighton, the country rose to the occasion and sent a sum of Rs. 11,250 to contest another seat, and he was soon after returned for Hackney. In 1875, Fawcett opposed in the new House of Commons the notorious ball given to the Sultan of Turkey at the expense of a starving country, exposing it as "magnificent meanness." He was ever watchful in those dark days of Lord Lytton's visitation to India, and vehemently opposed the iniquities of that ill-starred Viceroy. He kept his seat as a non-official member of Parliament, fighting out the wrongs done to the people of this country until 1880, when he became Postmaster-General. His acceptance of that office did not mean desertion of his distant fellow-subjects, for Lord Ripon had been then appointed Viceroy, and Fawcett had the gratification of finding that the principles for which he had fought so valiantly would receive due recognition at the hands of the new Viceroy and the liberal Government then in power.

Fawcett died in 1884, and had ceased to take an active Parliamentary interest in Indian affairs in 1880. Opportune, therefore, was the coming of Charles Bradlaugh. His interest in India was roused by the Ilbert Bill agitation of 1883. His formidable character, his wonderful gifts of eloquence and that spirit of generous hearted statesmanship which was his, were destined to make him one of the strongest and the bravest knights of India. But, to his principal acts of service to India, I shall refer in the proper place.

There were others too, Members of Parliament and editors whose sympathies were with India. They will be adverted to presently. I shall add here Mrs. Besant, whose splendid services and heroic sacrifices were yet veiled in the mystery of the future, but whose sense of Justice, love of Freedom, and comradeship with Charles Bradlaugh resulted in her vehement exposure of misrule in India in her little book, ENGLAND, INDIA AND AFGHANISTAN. In addition to the numerous friends in England, of whom only the foremost have been mentioned, there were in India itself the generous trio of whom only one survives : A. O. Hume, H. J. S. Cotton, and Sir W. Wedderburn.

IV

The forces which were slowly and surely moulding the movement of nationalism in Bengal have already been noticed. After Ram Mohan Roy sprang up in the field of Brahmoism two men of gigantic stature, Maharishi Debendra Nath Tagore and Keshub Chunder Sen. They were mostly responsible for the further developments of Brahmoism in Bengal. The work of the Raja who had passed away in 1834 and of the two great samajists who came up later had considerably helped what is known as the great renaissance of Bengal, which, though essentially provincial, had yet a vital bearing on the general development of Indian politics. The years 1865 to 1875 were the period of that renaissance. Poets and Novelists arose, and the modern literature

of Bengal came into being. Foremost among the authors of that revival was Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar, whose Widow Re-Marriage Act was only one sign of the spirit of emancipation created by the impact of European thought. By initiating the study of Samskrit in the Calcutta University on modern methods, he opened out the vista of ancient Indian Literature. The educated Indians of Bengal now felt that they had a Literature which could challenge comparison with the best of Europe. This added to the sense of National pride which was slowly coming to be. Just at this time, Keshub Chander Sen proceeded to England as an expounder of Brahmoism. His magnificent eloquence, the more captivating because of the Upanishadic terminology in which his thoughts were clothed, raised this "Swarthy prophet" in the estimation of all classes of Englishmen. He became so well known that it was a fashion in England to entertain him at socials and parties. The *Punch* asked :

Who among all living men
Is this Keshub Chander Sen,
Is he big as a bull or small as a wren,
This Keshub Chander Sen ?

He was a Hindu and a Bengali, and Bengal was proud of him. The home-coming of the first batch of young men after successful study in England added still further to this birth of National consciousness and pride. Satyendra Nath Tagore, Behari Lal Gupta, and Romesh Chunder Dutt from Bengal, and Shripada Babaji Thakore from

Bombay were the first to compete for the I. C. S. from India. Surendranath Bannerji followed soon, and a year or two later Ananda Mohan Bose became Wrangler. It was also now that Man Mohan Ghose and W. C. Bannerji distinguished themselves at the Calcutta bar, and Dwāarak Nath Mitter became a judge of the Bengal High Court.

There was born now a literature which reflected the spirit of the time. Michael Madhusudhan Dutt wrote the first modern epic in Bengali, and the clang of war and the heroism of great characters exercised profound influence on the mind of young Bengal. Ranglal Bahnerji stirred up patriotic pride by his poem dealing with the thrilling tales of Rajasthan. Deenabandra Mitra presented the darker side of British rule in his *Neel Darpana*, by describing the hardships of the peasantry on the plantations of Assam. Hem Chandra Bannerji wrote thrilling National lyrics and sang of the political indignities of India. Then came the shining array of Bankim Chandra Chatterji's novels, and he influenced the young considerably by his monthly, *Bhanga Dharsana*. The National awakening was thus expressed through the renascent Literature of Bengal. The effect of this Literature, as of the work of Keshub Chander Sen, and the other events related above, was to create a feeling of National self-respect and National pride in a people weighed down by the hypnotism of their own beliefs.

V

Lord Lytton's administration was the first principal driving force in the history of Indian politics. As in the case of Lord Curzon a generation later, it was the misrule of the autocrat which lashed into activity the slumbering energies of the Nation. The administration of the country had already made the situation serious. Poverty was alarmingly on the increase; taxes were grinding; the indigenous industries of the country were getting killed by lack of State protection and by foreign competition; famine raised its grisly head ever and anon; public opinion was feeble, and, what was more, the Government disregarded it; invidious distinctions of race were everywhere in evidence; the opening of the Suez Canal brought much of the worse elements of English Society and gave rise to race hatred; the growth of Railway communications facilitated racial incivility; the success of Indian officers roused great jealousy in their Anglo-Indian colleagues. It was at this time that Lord Lytton came. He gagged the Press and brought about all the disasters connected with the Afghan troubles of his time. The "Scientific Frontier" was a child of his creation. And when the country was being decimated by famine, the military expenditure of the Government was kept up monstrously high, and most shocking of all, the great pageant of the Delhi Darbar was organised. "Nero was fiddling when Rome was burning."

It was this state of affairs which imparted the impetus to political action in India. The new feeling expressed itself best in the Indian Association started at Calcutta in July, 1876, by Ananda Mohan Bose and Surendra Nath Bannerji. Mr. Bannerji had returned just a little earlier from an unsuccessful mission to England on the question of his dismissal from office. The National feeling in Bengal had already been roused to a considerable extent. Some recent events had added to the political excitement then prevailing. The deposition of Mulhar Rao Gaekwar, the trial of Ameer Ali, the Wahabi Chieftain, the assassination of Justice Norman at Calcutta and the dismissal of Mr. Bannerji were some of them. The mind of the younger generation was peculiarly receptive to the newer influences. It was a most lucky circumstance that Mr. Surendranath Bannerji had been spared the fate of rusting in some Secretariat and had dedicated himself to the cause of the country. His maddening eloquence which carried thousands of young men off their feet, his stupendous energies, his fervent imagination were bound to make him the organiser of the new forces and the leader of Young Bengal. His work lay at first chiefly among the students and the younger among the men of his time. Ananda Mohan, his illustrious co-adjutor, had seen a flourishing Students' Association at Bombay on his way from England back to Calcutta. They started together to work among the undergraduates, a course of action which was fruitful of

mighty results in the future. Surendranath's first lectures were on the rise of the Sikhs, the movements of young Italy and young Ireland, and he placed before the imagination of his student audiences the picture of a united and independent India. The dark days of Lord Lytton's administration brought him to the forefront of politics and the Indian Association was the result.

The British Indian Association was confined to the landed aristocracy to which it owed its initiation. There were in the seventies new interests which were unorganised. The younger men of the middle classes were coming out of Colleges in large numbers and they were moved by the ideals that Babu Surendranath placed before them. There was also the class of lawyers, the nucleus and the leaders of political life everywhere, and certainly the great and formidable mainstay of politics in India. The Association of Bannerji and Bose included these newer but the more potent factors of our National life. It may be useful to mention that on the opening day of the Indian Association, Mr. Bannerji's son passed away. He was put down to deliver the inaugural address on which depended much of the fortunes of that body. The bereavement was cruel and Surendranath could not go to the meeting. But when he was informed that his absence would mean the victory of reactionary forces, he left the remains of his son

with his weeping relatives and while they were yet uncremated, delivered a magnificent oration. It was a call to duty and union, it was the trumpet note of India's greatest Orator, and the Indian Association was broad-based upon the willing allegiance of sturdy and patriotic men. The Association had not passed a year since its inception, when Lord Salisbury reduced the age-limit for the Civil Service Examination to nineteen years. It was received with stormy protests and Dadabhai Naoroji entered the strongest and the most emphatic, through the columns of the English Press. The Indian Association opened a political campaign for the first time in the history of our National movement. Babu Surendranath, the most stalwart of Indian fighters, the invincible standard-bearer of many a noble cause, was chosen to undertake the propaganda. He toured in 1877 all over Northern India and addressed crowded and enthusiastic gatherings at Benares, Allahabad, Lucknow, Cawnpore, Meerut, Agra, Delhi, Aligarh, Amritsar, Lahore and Rawalpindi. The raising of the age-limit and the establishment of Simultaneous Examinations were the points raised in the tour, and the crowds of eager listeners of Hindus and Musalmans all over the northern country demonstrated that the people of all the parts of India could be gathered on a common political platform. Next year Surendranath went on a second political campaign to the western and the southern Presidencies. As a result, an All-India

Memorial was sent to the House of Commons on the Civil Service question.

VI

All this was in 1878. Lord Ripon landed at Bombay in January, 1880. "Judge me by my acts," he said, "not by my words". He concluded an honourable treaty with the Ameer, and repealed amidst the rejoicings of a Nation the accursed act of Lord Lytton against the Vernacular Press. Then came Local Self-Government which, the Viceroy courageously declared, "should precede National Self-Government". The new policy allayed the fears and the discontent of the former regime. Indian publicists looked with greater hope on the future. But in the autumn of 1883, the Hon. Mr. Courtenay Ilbert introduced in the Imperial Council a Bill which has been since associated with his honoured name. It aimed at the removal of an invidious disqualification "attaching to the Indian magistracy in the trial of European and American offenders". The racial feelings of the Anglo-Indian community were roused. It was a conflagration. The Anglo-Indian Council, including the Commander-in-Chief, stood against Lord Ripon. Their illustrious Press rose in arms. There was even a "Conspiracy by a number of men in Calcutta, who had bound themselves in the event of Government adhering to the projected legislation to overpower the sentries at Government House, to put

the Viceroy on board a steamer at Chandpal Ghat and send him to England *via* the Cape". (Mr. Buckland.) It is said that the Lieut.-Governor of Bengal knew the existence of the conspiracy. Lord Ripon stood alone. Indian public opinion should have risen equal to the occasion. Bengal, ever watchful, led the way by vigorous demonstrations. Bombay had an influential public meeting, but the rest of India including Madras, kept silent. Anglo-Indian opposition, on the other hand, was so well organised, and was prepared, as could be inferred from Mr. Buckland's testimony, for a silliness and audacity which in the case of Indians would surely have been followed with repression and penalties of all imaginable kinds. The measure which meant only the barest justice was defeated by an inglorious opposition.

But out of evil cometh good, and India benefited from the discomfiture of the Bill. The Provinces recognised that their lack of organisation and unity, and the consequent impossibility of mobilising the energies and the feelings of the State was the cause of a failure which they all felt so keenly. The warning was taken, and the three principal Capital cities of India girded up their loins for the struggle which they knew must come. Never before had they felt the cleavage between Indian and Anglo-Indian so much. Besides the opposition offered to the measure, the Anglo-Indian journals were filled with scurrilous

attacks on the people of this country. Much filth was discharged by a race of journalists whose career of abuse and vilification against the people on whose salt they live, has only gone on fattening with the years that have since rolled by. The Anglicised section of our countrymen who lived a life of detachment from their lesser brethren found themselves no more sacred in the eyes of those whom they had aspired to imitate. A Hindu revival was given birth to, with its momentous effect on National life and literature. Now also was published the Ananda Mutt of Bankim Chandra in which the cult of the Mother received the fullest and most artistic expression. The sacred mantra, Vande Mataram, was born now. The feeling of the country reacted also in the form of new Leagues started to promote concerted action and organise public life. The National League was established in 1884 by Sir Jyotindra Mohan Tagore, who was the premier citizen of the Metropolis of the Empire. Representative institutions for India was in the forefront of its programme. Madras opened its "Mahajana Sabha" under the lead of the late G. Subramania Iyer early in 1884. And on the 31st of January, 1885, was started the Bombay Presidency Association. It was decided upon in a meeting of the citizens of Bombay, presided over by Sir Jamsetji Jejeebhai, and convened by the illustrious trio, all of whom, alas, have now left the world of their labours: Badruddin Tyabji, Kashmath Telang and Pheroze Shah Mehta.

The Indian Association, meanwhile, had an active and distinguished record of work to its credit. A National Conference was held at Calcutta in 1883 at the Albert Hall. It was a successful and unprecedented gathering. It attracted a large number of delegates, and old men and young worked together in harmony and accepted a common ideal for the future. Mr. Keay, M. P., attended and took part in the Conference. Mr. Bannerji, in his opening address, referred to the Delhi assembly which he had attended, and appealed to his hearers to organise themselves and carry on active political campaigns. The next Conference, which was to come off in 1884, could not meet because of the International Exhibition at Calcutta. But in 1885 was held the second Conference in the Hall of the British Indian Association on the 25th, 26th and 27th December. All the parts of Bengal, the city of Bombay, and Berar were represented at the Conference. All the ancient families of Bengal had sent their representatives, and Mr. H. J. S. Cotton, who was to become the President of a Congress, attended and spoke at the Conference. On the third day of the Conference was announced, amidst deafening applause, that the National Congress would meet at Bombay under the leadership of Womesh Chunder Bannerji. The leaders of Bengal could not all attend it as they had no previous knowledge, but the Conferences which they had successfully held were discontinued, and the movement was wisely merged in the larger movement of the country.

VII

With this ends the story of the beginning of our political life. Its leadership passes hereafter to an All-India organisation, manned by the best brains of the country, and led by her noblest sons. Like the rills on distant and inaccessible mountain tops, our politics commenced with modest and silent beginnings. They flowed from different directions, united now and diverged again, meandering in their aimless course, yet holding in them the promise of a mighty onward flowing river scattering wealth and plenty to generations unborn. Many of those who helped the march of events have been gathered to their everlasting rest. One by one they have fallen in the slow and dreary march. Some yet live and old in years, and with the infirmities of age full upon them, they hold in their sinking hands the banner of the cause for which they have battled. Long may they live, and may it be given them to behold the break of the glorious dawn for which they have kept the weary vigil of a long, long night. The day is coming as a thousand signs can show for which they braved many a battle and withstood many a defeat. But the war has lasted long, and we shall presently turn to record its history, to mark its field of action, to note the weapons of its warfare, and the points of its strategy, to score its defeats and its victories, to single out its bravest soldiers and to cast our eyes into the future and lift, if we can, the curtain of the "Shall be".

CHAPTER II

The First Congress

The Associations in the metropolitan cities of India formed the nucleus of an All-India organisation. The Bombay Presidency Association grew in popularity and usefulness and the late Sir Pherozeshah Mehta was its leader from its beginning down to the end of his life. It had the help of ever so many journals, and some of them we have already noticed. The Bengal Associations went on also strongly supported in their work by the *A. B. Patrika*, which became in one night an English daily and was staffed by the six Ghose brothers, ready one after another to go to gaol if need be. The veteran G. Subramania Iyer was responsible through his two powerful journals and through the Mahajana Sabha for the soundness and the stability of public life in South India. There were also a set of brilliant men in the chief Provinces who kept up the spirit of public life. The Ilbert Bill agitation brought home to them the fatal need for organisation; the Delhi Darbar, which many of the distinguished men of the various Provinces attended, suggested the possibilities and usefulness of a Pan-Indian political movement to safeguard popular rights and win a more honourable place for their

country ; the International Exhibition at Calcutta in 1884 gave a further impetus to the feeling for a large National gathering ; the Theosophical Convention indicated the methods and illustrated the success of such an assemblage ; and the two Conferences at Calcutta, convened under the auspices of the Indian Association, established beyond doubt the feasibility, on the one hand, of an Indian National body of delegates, and, on the other, of the immense utility which would attend it and the unbounded enthusiasm with which it would be supported. The feeling and the desire was there as also the materials and the way. Only the master-hand was needed, the imagination which could comprehend the entire range of this extensive country, and the daring to begin the task in the face, it may be, of official frowns and gubernatorial opposition.

The master-builder appeared in the person of Allan Octavian Hume. He had long been a civilian at Ettawah in the Panjab. His close contact with the masses whom he loved and trusted opened out to him all the world of their sorrows. Endowed with a largeness of heart which the fumes of the Bureaucratic post he held could not corrupt, he realised how these millions of poor folk were ground down by taxes they could not pay, how the salt-tax made them live without salt, how the growing poverty of the country afforded them only one meal a day, how famines and pestilences decimated them time and

again, and all that sad and tragic tale, told so often during these fifty years and which is related yet unchanged by reform and unrelieved by hope. Allan Hume was a Theosophist and this must account for his supreme readiness to enter into the feelings of India, and his association with the Theosophical leaders who were nothing if not the best and the most devoted friends and admirers of India kept him pure and untainted by the years of service in the Bureaucracy of India. His long and efficient official career which bore on it the mark of heredity, and his gallant services in the days of the Mutiny, had endeared him to the Government as well. His heart had flowed forth towards the myriads of suffering masses whom he every day knew, and how well he had known them could be seen from some of his letters to Sir Auckland Colvin on the National Congress written in connection with the official opposition to the Allahabad Congress of 1887. He had intended to take up the service of India even in the seventies of the last century, but he waited for the greater freedom which his retirement would give him. Accordingly he addressed in 1883 an open letter, dated 1st of March, to the Graduates of the Calcutta University. The letter may be read in Sir William Wedderburn's life of Hume (pages 50-52). "In vain," it says, "may aliens like myself love India and her children; in vain, may they, for her and their good, give time and trouble, money and thought; in vain, may they struggle and sacrifice; they may assist with advice and

suggestions; they may place their experience and abilities and knowledge at the disposal of the workers, but they lack the essential of Nationality, and the real work must ever be done by the people of the country themselves." Then, it sounds an appeal for fifty men, to be the mustard-seed of future growth. It states that: "Every Nation secures precisely as good a government as it merits." "MEN know how to act." If you do not, rightly and inevitably are you subjected. "And rulers and taskmasters, they must continue, let the yoke gall your shoulders never so sorely, until you realise and stand prepared to act upon the eternal truth that, whether in the case of individuals or Nations, self-sacrifice and unselfishness are the only unfailing guides to freedom and happiness." Such were the stirring words with which the beloved friend of India tried to rally the workers. The appeal did not go forth in vain. The prominent workers in the country hurried up and sent responsive notes to the bugle call. In 1884 was formed the Indian National Union, the objects were provisionally drafted and Select Committees were formed at Karachi, Ahmedabad, Surat, Bombay, Poona, Madras, Calcutta, Benares, Allahabad, Lucknow, Agra, and Lahore. Mr. Hume was naturally chosen to discharge the toilsome task of the General Secretary.

It must also be mentioned that late in December, 1884, seventeen men met at Madras

in the house of the late Dewan Bahadur Raghunath Rao. Nearly all of them were delegates to the Theosophical Convention of that year, and bright with the blush of a renaissance in National thought, they met to consider what steps might be taken to inaugurate a National Congress of educated India. The Hon. Mr. - (now Sir) S. Subramania Iyer, Messrs. P. Rangiah Naidu and P. Ananda Charlu from Madras; Messrs. Narendra Nath Sen, Surendranath Bannerji, and M. Ghosh from Bengal; the Hon. Messrs. V. N. Mandlike, K. T. Telang and Dadabhai Naoroji from Bombay; Messrs. Vijiaranga Mudaliar and Pandurang Gopal from Poona; Sardar Dayal Singh from Benares; Mr. Harischandra from Allahabad; Messrs. Kashi Prasad and Pandit Lakshmi Narain from the N.-W. P.; Mr. Charuchandra Mitter from Bengal; and Mr. Shri Ram from Oudh formed the meeting. There is no record of what they did after the meeting was over. Nor do we know exactly what was done in the beginning by the "Indian National Union".

In March, however, of 1885, was issued a Manifesto stating that a Conference of the Indian National Union will be held at Poona from the 25th to the 31st December, 1885. The Conference was to be composed of the leading politicians of the country. The objects were: (1) To bring together the more earnest workers of the country and (2) to discuss and decide upon the political operations for the ensuing year. A Reception Committee

would be formed by the Sarva Janik Sabha to make the arrangements necessary for the Conference at Poona and to be responsible for the convenience of delegates. It was believed that, exclusive of Poona, Bombay, Sindh and Berar, would furnish about 20 delegates, Madras and Bengal each about the same number, and the N.-W. Provinces, the Panjab and Oudh together about half this number.

Mr. Hume was placed at the head of the movement, and, having settled the preliminaries, he proceeded to England to arrange for an organisation which would take up the agitation for the redress of Indian grievances. But before proceeding thither, he met Lord Dufferin, the Viceroy of India then, and explained to him the scheme that was decided upon. Mr. Hume owed it to the Viceroy to make the Congress purely political, and Lord Dufferin seems to have told him "that as head of the Government, he had found the greatest difficulty in ascertaining the real wishes of the people and that, for purposes of administration, it would be a public benefit if there existed some responsible organisation through which the Government may be kept informed regarding the best Indian public opinion." Mr. Hume abandoned the social aspect of the movement on the advice of the Viceroy. He was also told by Lord Dufferin that his idea of having the local Governors to preside over the Congress Sessions was not conducive to the

interests of the movement and that greater freedom and candour could be exercised in the absence of the official heads. Later on, again, when Lord Reay was proposed as the first President of the Congress in 1885, Lord Dufferin, while welcoming it as a proof of goodwill towards the Government, preferred an Indian should preside.

In England, Mr. Hume worked assiduously and held prolonged consultation with some prominent members of Parliament. He interviewed Lords Ripon and Dalhousie, had talks with influential men like Mr. Baxter, M.P. (Dundee), Mr. R. T. Reid, M. P. (Arrochar), Mr. Slagg, M. P. (Manchester) and others. He also negotiated with some editors (of the *Manchester Guardian*, *The Manchester Examiner*, *The Leeds Mercury*, *The Scotsman*, *The Glasgow Daily Mail*, *The Dundee Advertiser*, *The Western Times*, and the *Bedford Observer*) to publish telegrams about Indian affairs to be sent by the Indian Telegraph Union started by him at Bombay prior to his departure to England. "But, unfortunately, this useful agency was allowed to drop for want of funds." (Wedderburn.)

Having accomplished his mission, Mr. Hume proceeded to India. The Reception Committee at Poona had made admirable preparations. The Congress was to meet at Heera Bhag, in the Peishwa's Gardens, close by the sacred Parvati Hill, in the shrine on which Shivaji worshipped his Goddess. But a few days before the Congress

was to meet, some sporadic cases of cholera occurred in Poona and to the great disappointment of the patriotic and hospitable people of the historic Capital of Maharashtra, the place of meeting had to be changed. Thanks to the readiness of the Bombay Presidency Association, the Western Island City was ready in time to receive the representatives of the Nation.

II

The Gokuldas Tejpal Sanskrit College on the Gowatia Tank Road, Bombay, was the place sanctified by the holding of the First Session of the Congress. Delegates came pouring in from all the provinces to the Western City and on the evening of the 27th Sir William Wedderburn, Col. Phelps, Justice Jardine and Principal Wordsworth came over to receive the Representatives. The official report says that informal discussions were going on between the delegates throughout the 27th instant and that they had exchanged their minds fully before the Congress commenced its deliberations on the 28th noon at 12 o'clock. Madras sent 20 delegates, Bombay 36, and Bengal 3. It is highly interesting, even pathetic, to glance over the names of the leaders who began the movement and who have since played so signal a part in the subsequent history of the Congress. Bengal had sent two of her most illustrious sons, W. C. Bonnerji and Narendra Nath Sen. Mr. A. O. Hume, the Father of the Congress, had come from Simla. Bombay was represented by three

men, who also have like the others now ceased to be, Dadabhai Naoroji, P. M. Mehta and K. T. Telang. Madras had her voice heard through the Hon. Mr. S. Subramaniam Iyer, and Mr. P. Kesava Pillai was there from Anantapur. Of the veterans who had gathered there to lay the foundations of the future, only two survive, Sir D. E. Wacha and Sir S. Subramaniam, and the latter has grown with the Congress in age, mind and spirit, and there is none in India to-day whose record is as ancient and whose spirit is as youthful. There were present also as *amicæ curiæ*, Dewan Bahadur R. Raghunatha Rao, the Hon. Mr. M. G. Ranade, Lala Baijnath of Agra, and Professors Sundararaman and Bhandarkhar.

At 12 noon, on the 28th, the proceedings commenced with the proposal of Mr. W. C. Bonnerji to the Chair. Mr. A. O. Hume proposed, and the Hon. Messrs. Subramaniam and Telang supported it. The President claimed for the meeting a representative character, not of course, as he took care to point out, on the basis of legalised constituencies, but on the basis of "community of sentiments, community of feelings and community of wants". He then defined the objects of the Congress, and emphatically repudiated the calumny that it was a "nest of conspirators and disloyalists". He acknowledged the many and the varied benefits of British Rule in India, and added that "the desire to be governed according to the ideas of Government

prevalent in Europe was in no way incompatible with their thorough loyalty to the British Government. All that they desired was that the basis of the Government should be widened and that the people should have their proper and legitimate share in it."

The subjects taken up for discussion were : (1) The appointment of a Commission to enquire into the administration of India, (2) the abolition of the India Council, (3) the expansion of the existing Legislative Councils and the creation of new ones in the Panjab and the N.-W. P., (4) the curtailment of the military expenditure, (5) the holding of Simultaneous Examinations for the Civil Service, (6) the re-imposition of import cotton duties and (7) the separation of Burma from the Indian Viceroyalty.

The first Resolution was very ably moved by the late Mr. G. Subramania Iyer. After pointing out the benefits of British Rule and acclaiming the birth that day of the Indian Nation, he said that the transfer of the Government of India to the Crown resulted in the disappearance of the old Parliamentary control and supervision in the form of the Charters. The expensiveness of the Government had since become worse, and there were on all hands signs of distressing deterioration. The Parliament knew nothing of India, the India Council was opposed to all reforms, and the Indian Bureaucracy was more and more crushing

as time went on. He was followed by Sir P. M. Mehta who emphasised the need for representation of India on the Commission. That would ensure confidence and help the exposure of fallacies and the laying down of sound principles of administration. Babu Narendra Nath "Sen remarked that during the twenty-seven years following the transfer of Government to the Crown, marvellous changes had taken place in the country, and that the Government of the country was too antiquated for the spirit of the times, words as true to-day as thirty-two years ago. Mr. Montagu called the Government too wooden, too iron, too antediluvian only the other day in the House of Commons. A discussion followed, whether the body required should be a Royal Commission or a Parliamentary Committee, in which almost all the principal men took part, and the votes decided in favour of the former.

The Congress re-assembled the next day, and Mr. Chiplonkar moved the Resolution demanding the abolition of the India Council. He said in his forcible speech that the Court of Directors of the Company's days was better than this Council of effete Anglo-Indian officials sitting in judgment over their brothers in India. Mr. Mehta was opposed to all "secret, irresponsible conclaves," and laid down that Indian problems should be sifted in the fierce light of English Party Politics. Mr. Sayani rather thought it too much to

demand the *abolition* of a long-standing Council, but the discussion which followed indisputably proved the utter incorrigibility of that body of superannuated civilians.

The Hon. Mr. K. T. Telang, in a finely reasoned speech, called for the expansion of the Legislative Councils. Those he had known were mere shams. Mr. S. Subramaniam Iyer said that his experience of the Madras Council showed him the clear necessity for expansion. Mr. Dadabhai Naoroji made a powerful speech and claimed "the inheritance" which was the right of a British subject to claim. Lala Murlidhar complained that even the "sham" was denied to the Panjab. Mr. Dadabhai spoke later on in the course of the debate words which must be quoted as showing his unrivalled political prescience :

"The chief work of the Indian National Congress is to enunciate clearly and boldly our highest and ultimate wishes. Whether we get them immediately or not, let our rulers know what our highest aspirations are. If then, we lay down clearly that we desire to have the actual government of India transferred from England to India under the simple controlling power of the Secretary of State and of Parliament, through its Standing Committee, and that we further desire that all taxation and legislation shall be imposed here by Representative Councils, we say, what we are aiming at."

The Congress now adjourned to 10 in the morning of the next day, as the "Representatives" were to go to the Elephanta Caves.

The proceedings were resumed on the 30th with the reply of Mr. Telang closing the debate on his resolution, which was put to vote and unanimously carried. Then was announced by Mr. N. G. Chandavarkar, who had just returned from England, the message of Lord Ripon "Tell your Countrymen not to despair".

Dadabhai Naoroji moved the next Resolution on "The Question of Poverty or Prosperity," "The Question of Life or Death," "The Question of the Civil Services". He made a most informative speech, and in the discussion following, Mr. D. S. White pleaded for the abolition of the system of imported Civilians. In the splendid reply of the G. O. M., every word of which is true even to-day, he said: "Every pie paid to a foreigner is a *complete material loss to the country*. Every pie paid to a native is a *complete material saving to the country*." He based his arguments entirely on the drain scandal. Mr. Rangiah Naidu denounced the increase in military expenditure which had risen from 11.5 millions in 1857 to 17 millions in 1884. Mr. D. E. Wacha seconded the proposition and arrayed an overwhelming mass of evidence in support of it.

Then thanks were voted to the Chair, and Mr. Hume was accorded three hearty cheers. He

accepted it with thanks and called for "three times three cheers, and, if possible, three times that" for Queen Victoria. The Congress then dissolved.

The Bombay correspondent of the *London Times* wrote a fairly favourable account to that Journal. But in the Editorial remarks it was stated that the Congress was not representative, that the Muhammadans "as a body" had kept themselves aloof, and that the transformation implied in the resolutions was unwise and impracticable. It concluded by saying: "It was by force that India was won, and it is by force that India must be governed. If we were to withdraw, it would be in favour not of the most fluent tongue or the most ready pen, but the strongest arm and the sharpest sword. It would perhaps be well for the members of the late Congress to reconsider their position from this very practical point of view." This was ably replied to by Mr. K. T. Telang in a letter which pointed out the association of two such leading Muhammadans as Sayani and Dharmasi. Also, some 67 places in India discussed the resolutions and accepted them, and the Indian Telegraph Union sent telegrams of them to the leading Liberal organs of England and Scotland.

III

How instructive and how sad it all looks when we think of the First Congress at this time of day ! Thirty-two years and more have passed

away since then, yet how many of the demands of that early day are conceded? They lacked neither argument on the part of those who made them, nor the sanction of the great and urging needs of the people. The concessions asked were extremely moderate as Sir William Hunter himself admitted two years later, and they were urged by the best brains of the country, by men like Dadabhai Naoroji, K. T. Telang, P. M. Mehta, and S. Subramaniam Iyer, men who have since held high and responsible positions with signal honour, both in the official and the non-official fields of activity. Yet how much has been gained? Commissions of enquiry were given, but what were the results beyond the collection and collation of evidence? The India Council still exists, and is still manned by the effete and the superannuated, and the admission of a few Indians has improved the situation very little. All the abuses in the administration then complained of and so bitterly, still keep contented house together. The Legislative Councils were expanded by Lord Morley, and the Indian Councilors have all admitted them to be little better if better at all than the "gilded shams" and the "magnificent non-entities" complained of in the earlier days. No more cogent words were used to defend the cause of Simultaneous Examinations, nor did a greater advocate plead for them. All the same, the late Public Services Commission "has murdered justice," as Pandit Madan Mohan said, having regard to "grounds of policy" and

“British responsibility for the good Government of India,” cant phrases both of them. What about the import duties on foreign goods? After many, many years, they were imposed last May on Lancashire and the imposition was so belated and actuated by such circumstances that it had lost all its grace, apart from the question of its permanence in the Future. And the military expenditure? Mr. Gokhale has been complaining in every one of his Budget speeches until the very day of his death that the growth in it was the most cruel injustice to the people. Dadabhai Naoroji said in the First Congress now thirty-three years ago:

“Why, if you are to be denied Britain’s best institutions, what good is it to India to be under the British Raj? It will be simply another Asiatic despotism. What makes us proud to be British subjects, what attaches us to this foreign rule with deeper loyalty than even our own past native rule is the fact that Britain is the parent of free and representative government, and that we as her subjects and children are entitled to inherit the great blessing of Freedom and representation. We claim the inheritance. If not we are not the British subjects which the Proclamation proclaims us to be, equal in rights and privileges with the rest of Her Majesty’s subjects. We are only British drudges or slaves. Let us persevere. Britain would *never be* a slave and could not in her very nature and instinct *make* a slave. Her greatest glory is

Freedom and representation and as her subjects we shall have these blessed gifts."

Have succeeding events justified this belief? Has England's past attitude confirmed this faith? The answer is an emphatic and unhesitating "No" and from this "No" has sprung the universal demand of Home Rule for India.



CHAPTER III

The Congress—Its Career Down to the Partition of Bengal

I

The Bombay Congress was an experiment. It was cautiously planned and carefully piloted. The footsteps of the leaders were still faltering. Only seventy-two had taken part, and these were not elected. The Resolutions, though well considered and well discussed, were few, and though full of a sense of solemn responsibility, compared with later Congresses it was only a Committee of the best men, and that general enthusiasm of the rank and file, that magnitude of the body and those specimens of oratory which Calcutta inaugurated were yet absent. The Second Congress was far in advance of the first. During the year a good deal of public discussion was carried on of the resolutions of the last Congress and its delegates had carried its gospel and inspiration to all parts of the country. There was more time to consider and greater leisure to prepare. The Muhammadans who were but two in the last Congress were now numbering many more, and there was perfect cordiality between the Hindus and Musalmans. The delegates were more regularly elected by Standing Committees all over the country, and the possible resolutions were circulated in the country some time before the Congress. The Delegates

numbered about 434, and were given huge ovations as their trains left the stations. To crown all, Dadabhai Naoroji was elected President of the Congress, this time a Parsi.

The Town Hall was filled to overflowing with eager delegates and visitors from all over the country. Dr. Rajendra Lal Mitra took the chair, as one of the eldest of the Bengalis, and in welcoming the delegates said : "It has been the dream of my life that the scattered units of my race may some day coalesce and come together; that instead of living merely as individuals, we may one day so combine as to be able to live as a Nation. In this meeting I behold the commencement of such coalescence. (Cheers.)" Dr. Mitra welcomed the Muhammadan delegates without whom the Congress would be a "marriage without a bride". Talking of Legislative Councils, he said, amidst cheers : "Let the Representatives be elected."

Babu Jai Kishen Mukherji proposed Dadabhai Naoroji to the chair. "It is no wonder that objects such as these should have drawn together distinguished gentlemen from all parts of the country," said Jai Kishen, "when you find a blind old man, bending under the infirmities of age, taking a part in the deliberations". The proposition was seconded in Urdu by Nawab Pera Ali Khan from Oudh, who declared that the interests of the Hindus and Muslims were "indivisible and identical," and asked the assembly to "disregard" any "slanders" to the contrary.

Cheers were now called for the "Muhammadan community and National unity" and lustily responded to.

The President, Dadabhai Naoroji, delivered a truly statesmanlike address, pointing out that the Royal Commission demanded was not yet given. But he had faith in England, and as an example cited the instances of the Public Services Commission, then collecting evidence, and the Debate of 1833 in the Houses of Parliament on the Government of India. He called attention to the poverty of India and the consequent need of reorganising the public services on a fairer and more equitable basis. It must be added that the address opened with a convincing vindication of the choice of the Congress to be purely political in its activities. Reference was made to the creation of the Legislative Council for the N.-W.P., and the President was generally satisfied with what was done since the First Congress.

The Congress had no Subjects Committee yet, and on the 28th the delegates all assembled at the B. I. Association Rooms. After the resolution of loyalty, came up Mr. Wacha with his resolution on Indian poverty. Able speeches were made, the whole position was made clear, and after discussion, it was carried. But the most important resolution was that touching the expansion of the Legislative Councils, moved by Babu Surendranath. This was a magnificent oration, the first of a number of splendid ones to-

which later Congresses were to listen spell-bound. The orator of Bengal shone in all the gorgeousness of his rhetoric, and the speech was punctuated with cheers. "Representation is our motto, our watchword, our battle-cry, the gospel of our political redemption," said he amidst thundering applause. He was followed by Mr. Chandavarkar, well known in later days for his highly learned, logical though rather pedantic and certainly long-winded speeches, Syed Sherfuddin, Khader Bhuksh, Malik Bhagwandoss—a stalwart frontier man who said that Hindus could represent Muhammadans and *vice versa*, that there was no political divergence between the two, as his experience of his Dera Ismail Khan had taught him, and who answering the charge that the Congress was the effusion of the Bengali Babu drew forth his handsome frontier frame and asked: "Do I look like a Bengali Babu?"—and Pandit Madan Mohan who made the maiden speech. He said "What is an Englishman without representative institutions? Why, not an Englishman at all (cheers), a mere sham (cheers), a base imitation (cheers) and I often wonder as I look round at our nominally English magnates, how they have the face to call themselves Englishmen and yet deny us representative institutions, and struggle to maintain despotic ones. (Cheers.) Will any one tell me that Great Britain will, in cold blood, deny us, her free-born subjects, the first of these, when, by the gift of the letter, she has qualified us to appreciate and incited us

to desire it? (Cheers.)" Chief among the other demands of the Second Congress were the demand for the separation of the Executive and Judicial functions, and the resolution to have the right of volunteering thrown open to Indians.

Dadabhai Naoroji made a few remarks in concluding and advised moderation and dignity in the demands of the Congress, and emphasised the need for union and perseverance.

The Calcutta Congress had cemented the union of the old and the young. Anglo-Indian Journals used to say that the Congress was manned by impetuous young Radicals. The re-proof was given by Jai Kishen Mukherji's speech in closing the first day of the Calcutta Congress. "Standing as I do, one of the few remaining links between the Old India of the past and the New India of to-day, I can scarcely hope to see or enjoy the fruit of those labours on which this Congress and the Nation it represents are entering; but I am glad to have lived to see this new departure, and if an old man's sympathy and good wishes can aid or encourage you in the noble work you are undertaking, I can say from the bottom of my heart that sympathy and those good wishes are already yours." Add to this the presiding of Dr. R. L. Mitra and the silent sympathies of Maharishi Debendranath Tagore. The Calcutta Congress had united the Hindus and the Muslims as well. But to Madras belonged the honour of putting the crown on this early attempt of the

Hindu-Muslim entente by the choice of Badruddin Tyabji to the honoured office of the Presidentship of the Third Congress.

The Third Congress, says the Report, " bore every appearance of having become a permanent National institution". It was characterised by repeated and pathetically sincere expressions of loyalty to the British Throne. Every demand was expressed in terms of loyalty, and in words which were echoed and re-echoed by all the Liberal papers of England, the Chairman of the Reception Committee declared the Congress to be "the soundest triumph of British administration and a crown of glory to the British Nation". The Third Congress attracted a larger number of delegates who numbered 607. Mr. Veeraraghava Chariar's catechism, a conversation in Tamil between Khader Buksh and Faribuddin, on the burning political topics of the day, was circulated broadcast among the masses. Subscriptions ranging from anna one to eight annas came pouring in from all parts of India, and the delegates too represented all the parts of the country. The official report puts the general feeling in the words of the stanza :

" From Kashmir's icy mountains
From Cochin's coral strand
Where Mysore's sunny fountains
Roll down their golden sand ;
From many an ancient river
From many a palmy plain
They call us to deliver
Their land from error's chain."

Madras was the first to erect the pavilion and 3000 spectators had gathered to attend the Third Congress. Messrs. Norton and John Adam were two of the new delegates, and the Indian Christians had a more prominent share in it.

The Presidential Address of Mr. Badruddin Tyabji began with a vindication of the Congress from the charge that it was a Hindu Congress. He endorsed Dadabhai's statement that it must needs be a political body, and asserted its loyalty. If the best educated men of whom the Congress was composed were called disloyal, then there was little hope for the Government of the country. It advised the formation of a Committee to preliminarily discuss the resolutions before putting them before the Congress.

The principal resolution was that relating to the reconstitution of the Legislatures on a more representative and on an elective principle. The task of moving it was entrusted to Babu Surendranath, who had by now become the favourite of the Congress. In a speech marked by a nobility of style, magnificence of diction and effectiveness of delivery, all his own, he moved the resolution and said: "We unfurl the banner of the Congress, and upon it are written in characters of glittering gold, which none may efface, the great words of this Resolution: 'Representative Institutions for India'." The resolution was the germ of the Self-Government resolution of the 31st Congress at Lucknow. How true even to-day are the words

spoken with such admirable eloquence now thirty years ago, at Madras, by the greatest and most eloquent Indian advocate for Home Rule. If the progress of a generation could justify only the concessions of Lord Morley, and what is worse, their neutralisation by the Indian Bureaucracy, then one might well despair of winning at any time Swaraj for India. Mr. Bannerji said: "It is impossible to think of a domestic grievance or a matter of domestic complaint, which will not be remedied, if the constitution of the Councils were changed and remodelled according to our programme. Talk of the separation of Judicial from Executive functions, why, the reform would be effected at once, if we had a potential voice in the making of our laws. Talk of the wider employment of our countrymen in the public service, why, the Queen's Proclamation would be vindicated to the letter (applause) if we had some control over the management of our domestic concerns. (Applause). You fret and growl under the rigours of an income-tax which touches even the necessities of subsistence, why, the incidence of the tax would be altered, the minimum raised, if we had anything to do with the imposition of the tax; or if we were permitted to modify it. (Applause)". It would be unwise to formulate details and elaborate minutely the scheme. The enemies would obscure the essentials by over-emphasising the details. The Resolution claimed that one-half of the Councils should consist of *elected* representatives of the people. From the

one-third granted by the India Council's Act of 1861 to the one-half demanded after the progress of twenty-six years was not a big jump into the unknown. The speech concluded with one more eloquent appeal to England and an expression of confidence at once noble and pathetic, in her sense of justice and love of Freedom. "When Italy was struggling for liberty, England stretched forward the right hand of sympathy. When Greece was endeavouring to assert her place among the nationalities of the earth, England was there the foster-mother of Freedom, responsive to the call. We are neither Italians nor Greeks. We are something better. We are British subjects. (Hear, hear, and applause.) England has taken us into her bosom and claims us as her own. We appeal to her by the sweetest, the gentlest, the tenderest and yet, with all, the most durable of all ties, that which binds the mother to her offspring, to confer upon us the inestimable boon of representative institutions, and I am sure we shall not appeal in vain." Raja Sir T. Madhava Rao seconded the proposition. He spoke after considering the question from all points of view, and though "a conservative by temperament and training" was profoundly convinced of the necessity of Representative Councils for India. He added that he saw "unmistakable signs of their coming to be granted" in a year or two". Thirty years have passed since then!

Mr. Eardley Norton was one of the supporters of the resolution. He made the first of those

brilliant and incisive speeches, full of keenness and convincing power, which he was to make in future from the Congress platform. He did not think that any other reform was "so important and far-reaching in its ultimate effects" as that of the reconstitution of the Legislative Councils. 'It contained the richest germs of future political progress. "The day will come," he added, "when an infinitely larger and truer freedom will be yours, when the great question of taxation will be within your grasp, when you will, in truth, realise that you have got something more than mere potential power, when you shall place your hand upon the purse strings of the country and the Government. (Loud and continued applause.) This was indeed a flattering prediction by one who was in no sense a visionary. Thirty years have elapsed since the prophecy, but

To-morrow, and to-morrow, and to-morrow,
Creeps in this petty pace from day to day
To the last syllable of recorded time.

But Mr. Norton did *his* work and said: "The time is fast coming when you shall enjoy that fuller political franchise which you are fit to enjoy even to-day. (Loud and continued cheering.)" He was followed by Pandit Bishan Narain Dhar, who made also his Congress *debut* in a speech characterised by that learning, vigour, and manly dignity for which he has been justly famous. He quoted Mr. Gladstone, who said that the question of English power in India was an Indian question according to laws of rights

which were fast becoming laws of fact, and that the title to English occupation depended entirely on its being profitable to the Indian Nations. Pandit Madan Mohan, whose "heart beats within me as I rise to speak on this great subject," made one of those speeches characterised by an eloquence which owes its power not to periods and sentiments but to the force of the speaker's character and the purity and passion of his convictions.

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The separation of the Executive and Judicial functions, demanded by Mr. N. Subramaniam, and supported among others by Kali Charan Bannerji and Ambica Charan Muzumdar was then passed. This is another old question moved as we shall see by Congress after Congress until at last both the speakers and the institution have become tired of it. The next resolution which was highly important was that of admission into Military Service and the establishment of a system of volunteering moved by Mr. C. Sankaran Nair and supported by Malik Bhagwan Das, Raja Rampal Singh, John Adam, M. A. Bhimji and others. It called forth warm speeches from all and showed the necessity for the Volunteer Corps both from the people's and the Government's point of view. To like effect was the resolution about opening military colleges moved by Narendranath Sen. The repeal of the Arms Act elicited some discussion. The maiden speech of Babu Bipin Chandra Pal is worth the reading.

The speech of Surendranath in answer to the remarks of Mr. Chandavarkar—whose ultra-modernism was evidenced even so early—was punctuated with applause and marked out the great trumpet-voiced tribune of the Congress.

The Congress closed on the evening of the third day with some concluding words from Mr. Badruddin Tyabji, who expressed pleasure at the co-operation of some enlightened European members with the Congress, and exhorted his hearers to work on with perseverance and enthusiasm to obtain that National Self-Government to which, however, they were yet entirely new.

The Madras Congress was honoured by the invitation to the Garden Party given by Lord Connemara. But the next session at Allahabad had to contend with a factor till now a stranger, the Local Government. The Congress had been meeting so far only in the Provincial Cities administered by Governors, who, though living in an atmosphere surcharged with bureaucratic influences, could yet be trusted to keep their heads occasionally. But Allahabad was under a Lieut.-Governor by name Sir Aucland Colvin. What was more, the Congress, as Mr. Yule pointed out, had outlived the "Pooh-pooh stage," and became an established institution of the people. The Bureaucracy was sure, therefore, to oppose and annoy it, for one of their primary virtues is jealousy.

The Local Government, egged on, as ever usual, by the Anglo-Indian Press, tried their very best to render the Congress homeless at Allahabad. Khusro Bagh was at first allowed, and, later on, the permission was cancelled. A plot of land was then rented near the Fort, and four months later, the rent was returned on sanitary grounds. The Reception Committee next secured a group of houses, but they were prohibited from using them because of their being within military limits. Pandit Ajudhyanath, Chairman of the Reception Committee, was quite undaunted and he kept sending daily bulletins recording the number of delegates registering themselves with a vengeance. The authorities and Anglo-India thought, and chiefly the *Pioneer*, that the Congress would wander an orphan in the streets of Allahabad. But just seven weeks before the Session, a member of the Reception Committee quietly leased the Lowther Castle and a tent with accommodation for 5000 men was soon ready. Other Shamianas were erected by liberal nobles, and the Maharaja of Durbhanga was ever ready with his sympathy and support. Lowther Castle stood next to the Government House and Sir Aucland must have "fumed in helpless wrath" as the preparations went on triumphant, and the Congress rang out its victory.

There was opposition from Raja Shiva Prasad of Benares, and Sir Syed Ahmed of Aligarh. The former became a delegate in spite of it, and used his right as a speaker to insult the Congress, an

act which created intense excitement and would have resulted in serious injuries to the Raja were it not for the strong escort provided by the Reception Committee. The Report might well say that the Fourth Congress was "heralded by a tumultuous outbreak of opposition". But thousands of leaflets were circulated through the year and hundreds of meetings were held, and even women were discussing the movement in domestic coteries. Thanks to the opposition, 1500 delegates were elected, and 1248 attended the Fourth Congress under the leadership, this time, of an Englishman, Mr. George Yule.

The Presidential Address laid its greatest stress on the question of Representative Councils. The reform of the Legislatures in accordance with the pledges of statesmen and the Proclamation of the Queen, the concession of the right of interpellation, the increase of the Indian element by substituting for the one-third of the nominated non-official members, one-half of elected members, the submission of Budgets to them—these constituted the most important resolution of the earlier days. Presidential pronouncements were delivered and the best speakers and greatest men used to expound the subject. Mr. Yule referred to Disraeli's statement that for some time India should be regarded as "a great and solemn trust committed to it by an all-wise Providence," and said in reply: "The 650 odd numbers threw back the trust upon the hands of Providence to be looked after

as Providence Itself thinks best." The whole address stands unsurpassed for its manly dignity and independence.

The first resolution was the reform of the Legislatures, a demand already four years old, moved by Mr. K. T. Telang, who gave a telling reply in his speech to the attacks of Sir Aucland and Lord Dufferin and seconded by Babu Surendranath. He began by expressing thanks for the opposition to the Congress. "Causes, the noblest, the most beneficent, the most far-reaching in their consequences for good, have never prospered or triumphed except under the stress of adverse criticism." He quoted Mr. Gladstone, who, knowing of the Congress, said: "It will not do for us to treat with contempt or even with indifference, the rising aspirations of this great people." Pandit Bishan Narain Dhar and Lala Lajput Rai, in his maiden speech, supported the proposition. The former expressed faith in England and the latter quoted Sir Syed Ahmed's opinions in 1858. Mr. S. Ramaswami Mudaliar drew a contrast between French India and British India than which nothing should have been more poignant—aye, more humiliating to the legislatures of the time and the policy which sponsored them.

The Resolution on the Civil Services followed, moved in his telling and incisive way by Mr. Norton, and there was this time an important Resolution on Education and another on Police Reform. Then the military resolutions were

reaffirmed. Mr. Bhimji remarked that his West Indian servant could carry arms while he could not, and Mr. Mehta declared : " You cannot and ought not to emasculate a Nation." But they *could* emasculate and *have* emasculated the Nation. The I.D.F. has not bettered matters. The twelfth resolution moved by Captain Banon, seconded by Captain Hearsay, protested against State-regulated prostitution, and the latter pointed out that the Government had hired 2000 women for " the hideous purpose."

II

It is well here that we pause and consider the official, the Anglo-Indian, and the English attitude to the National Congress. The Anglo-Indian journals in India had never any sympathy for the movement or for the forces it represented. The *Pioneer*, the *Englishman*, the *Statesman*, and papers of this breed kept ever barking, a nuisance to the peaceful passers-by. The Congress was a Babu Congress, a Hindu Congress, a disloyal Congress, a talking Congress, and what not. The Congress was too strong for this abuse. But it was fortunate that in the early days it had official sympathies. Lord Dufferin's sympathies and advice are well known. He gave a reception to the delegates at Calcutta taking care, however, to point out that they were received only as "distinguished visitors" to the capital. Lord Connemara even wished to attend the Congress but he was advised to receive the delegates at a garden party, which he did

with much grace and warm cordiality. But here the curtain dropped. The Lieut.-Governor of Allahabad was a man of quite a different type. He had come to India after not quite an enviable record at Egypt. He took umbrage at the leaflet of Veeraraghavachariar, and "The Old Man's Hope" of Allan Hume. But he was put down by the resourcefulness and the determination of the Congress. Lord Dufferin himself had by now succumbed to his stronger environments. Possibly also with the diplomatic pension at Rome before his eyes, as an English paper pointed out, he brushed aside his earlier record, and called the Congress the organ of a "microscopic minority" and their work "a big jump into the unknown". The speech at St. Andrew's dinner was promptly met by a powerful rejoinder from Mr. Norton. Mr. Bradlaugh tore it to pieces in a speech at Newcastle, and Lord Dufferin struggled very hard indeed in his vindication. In 1890, again, the Lieut.-Governor of Bengal returned the tickets sent him and his family by the Reception Committee, and Mr. P. C. Lyon, his Private Secretary, since well known for many other things, sent a note in which it was stated: "The orders of the Government of India *definitely prohibit the presence* of Government officials at such meetings." But Lord Lansdowne sent a *Communique* pointing out that the statement of the Local Government was based on a misconstruction of the G. O. of the Imperial Government. It was only *participation* that was prohibited, and the Viceroy admitted

that the Congress was "perfectly legitimate in itself," compared it to "the more advanced Liberal party" in Europe, and added that the attitude of the Government towards this as towards the Conservative section, was one of perfect neutrality. The neutrality was preserved more or less through the succeeding years so far at least as the Supreme Government was concerned, but the forces engendered by the Partition resulted in the very severest attacks on the Congress. No G. O.s were sent, and no methods of Sir Auckland were followed, but some of the best Congressmen, men like Tilak, Surendranath, Bepin Chandra Pal, Lajput Rai and Aswin Kumar Dutt and many others of the National party before and since connected with the Congress, were harassed, sentenced and deported, sometimes with trial, sometimes with a farce of it, more often with none at all. The Congress was looked upon with suspicion, and "Rally the Moderates" was the only call of friendship. It was, however, in 1914, that a complement was again paid in the visit of Lord Pentland of Madras to the Congress. The event was no doubt unique, but subsequent events have shown that the importance attached to it at the time was quite exaggerated. It was this same noble Lord, who, three years later, professed ignorance of the famous Resolution of the Lucknow Congress. The Bombay Government prohibited the attendance of Government Servants at the 30th Congress which was presided over by a confirmed Moderate of the type of Sir S. P. Sinha.

The 31st Congress was honoured by an insolent communication warning against emphasis leaders who had known more of public life and its responsibilities than this successor of Sir Auckland Colvin. We await with interest to what Berigal would do, presided over, as it is, by a Governor who took exception even to a public meeting of citizens.

The English papers were very sympathetic, and we now go back to the early days. The *Gloucester Journal*, speaking of the Third Congress, said in 1888: "Hitherto England has been able to plead the cause of ignorance for her wrong doing and blunders in Indian affairs. Now, happily, she has no longer cause to plead such an excuse. For now at last the voice of India has made itself heard." The *Overland Telegraph* remarked: "In fact we have taught them to demand reforms constitutionally and they avail themselves intelligently of the privilege." The *South Port Visitor*, generally sympathetic, thinks persistence in the repeal of the Arms Act would give to the Congress "a doubtful colour". "Delay is suicidal," says the *Eastern Press*, referring to the concession of reforms demanded by the Third Congress. "If the native population be contented and well disposed towards English Rule, we can afford to defy the danger of Russian encroachments. If, however, we are hated and disliked by the natives, the days of our Indian Empire are numbered." The *Weekly Record* burst

into this apostrophe : " But the speeches, listen, Briton's born, how they speak in your own tongue; how their diction equals (also, in their comparative aggregate surpasses) yours; the sparkling wit; the cutting sarcasm; the brilliant rhetoric; the impressive oratory, the 'moving eloquence, the earnestness!" Instances of such sympathy can be quoted in any number, but it is sufficient for the present to refer to that very useful and abundant source of information on the subject, *India in England*, two volumes published by G. P. Varma & Brothers Press, Lucknow. The English paper which was most virulent against the Congress was the *London Times*. It once quoted with approval the remark of Sir Lepel Griffin, whose name was received in the Third Congress with "groans, hisses and cries of shame," the remark "you (the Maharattas) are their superiors in strength and courage. They (Bengalis) are your superiors in noise and volubility."

III

" A grander, a more enthusiastic assemblage, I venture to say that none here have ever witnessed either in India or Europe," such were the words with which Mr. Norton described what was unquestionably the most brilliant Session of the Congress in the early days. The Fifth Congress, known commonly as "the Bradlaugh Session," was attended by 6000 men, and the delegates numbered 1889, a figure which corresponded with

the year of the Session and which remained unsurpassed for 25 years afterwards, until the Congress went once again to its "own native land". The coming of Mr. Bradlaugh, the sturdiest commoner of his times, a man endowed with "a frame of adamant and a soul of fire," was the cause of so many attending, and even Government officials went in disguise. "The young enthusiast," as Mr. Mehta said, "whom we started, has now come back to us, robust and manly, broadened and strengthened, with a record of achievements of which we may be justly proud". A noted feature of this Congress was the presence of 12 lady delegates, among whom were Pandita Ramabhai, Mrs. Ganguli and Mrs. Ghosal. The Welcome Address of Mr. P. M. Mehta, concluded with a welcome to Mr. Bradlaugh, endorsed with thunderous applause. Sir William Wedderburn was the President of the Session. Among the subjects discussed were the question of Permanent Settlement on which Mr. S. Subramaniam made a fine speech, the separation of Executive and Judicial functions, the report of the Public Services Commission on which Mr. Gokhale made his Congress debut, and the Arms Act. But the one which naturally was given the most prominence and was particularly important this time because of the presence of Charles Bradlaugh was the expansion of the Legislative Councils. Mr. Bradlaugh's Draft Bill had been before the country for some time, and he had come to the Congress to ascertain personally the opinion of the Congress and the country.

The Resolution was based on the Draft Bill which again was on the lines suggested and decided upon by previous Congresses, and Mr. Eardley Norton was asked to move it. He expounded its provisions and principles in a speech impossible for any but those of high forensic gifts. Pandit Ajudhyanath supported, and cried "stuff and nonsense" in repudiating the charge of disloyalty. Pandit Bishan Narain Dhar made one more of his excellent speeches and said: "What we want is not sham but reality. . . not nomination which is another name for deception, but representation which is the essence of political reform. (Prolonged cheers.)" Pandit Madan Mohan asked if there could be "anything more in conflict with reason and justice" than the withholding of the reform demanded. Mr. Surendranath came last and made one of the most effective and magnificent of his speeches, and whole tempests of applause greeted every pause of "the grey-bearded son of thunder". He welcomed the Draft Bill as the symbol, the herald of the new dawn. "Gentlemen," he said, "our Legislative Councils are so many farces (yes, yes and cheers), magnificent non-entities, gilded shams, which may delude children, but cannot deceive sensible men like ourselves, who have grown into the adolescence of vigorous manhood. (Cheers.)" At the end of a peroration which was delivered according to the report amidst "a perfect storm of applause," India's greatest orator said: "We have great confidence in the justice and

generosity of the English people (loud cheers), and above all we rely with abounding faith upon the liberty-loving instincts of the greatest Representative Assembly in the world (cheers), the palladium of English liberty, the sanctuary of the free and the brave—the British House of Commons. (Loud and prolonged applause)." A faith very touching indeed! Bradlaugh's bill asked for half elected members, one-fourth ex-officio and the rest to be nominated by the Government. Revenue districts were to constitute territorial units for electoral purposes. All male British subjects in India above 21 years of age with certain qualifications were to be voters. The elections were all to be by ballot. To these provisions were added certain safeguards to protect the interests of the communities. All this was in 1889 and 1890. Twenty-seven years have passed, and Lord Cross's and Lord Morley's reforms are all we got. The progress of reforms in India is so tardy. But we ought not to complain, lest we should be called "impatient idealists". "Ah! how many of the most tragic miscarriages in human history have been due to the impatience of the idealist". John Morley would sigh and exclaim, and his Arbroath audience would shout a responsive chorus.

The great champion who was honoured with countless addresses, which could only be taken as read, was presented with one of the Congress on the third day, and the speech he made in reply has been justly held to be memorable. He asked :

"For whom should I work, if not for the people? Born of the people, trusted by the people, I will die for the people. And I know no geographical or race limitations."

The Sixth Congress was welcomed to Calcutta by Man Mohan Ghose. 702 were the delegates, and more they should have been were it not for the limitation placed at their number during the previous Session. But the pavilion at the Tivoli Gardens accommodated 7000 visitors, and the Session was well attended throughout. Dr. Rajendra Lal Mitra was lying ill, Mr. W. C. Bonnerji could not come by reason of "long continued ill-health and domestic affliction," and Surendranath could only be present. A feeling of deep discontent, which developed into unrest in due course, was now born. The trans-frontier policy of the Government, "ruinous" and "un-principled," had caused serious dissatisfaction. The Report complains further that India's free-born people are denied even a small fraction of fundamental political rights. The monopolising of 95 per cent of the higher appointments by Europeans; the starvation of one-fifth of the people; the gradual ruin of Indian arts and industries; the demoralisation of the masses because of the iniquitous system of excise; "the barbarous and obsolete system, miscalled justice" of combining Executive and Judicial, fiscal and police powers in one functionary; the absence of justice for the poor against the rich; and the non-official against

the official—all these are bitterly complained of in the official report of the proceedings. Mr. P. M. Mehta, who presided, began by vindicating the rights of Parsis as Indians and declared that whatever attempts might be made to lure them away, they would never renounce their birthright for a mess of pottage, however fragrant and tempting. He made gratifying mention of the work done by the Congress deputation in England in the previous year. Talking of the Councils, Mr. Mehta said that one more argument was furnished by the declaration of Sir J. Gorst, that the farce of discussing the Indian Budget in the House of Commons would be discontinued. The address ended with an expression of faith in English statesmanship, and in the living and fertilising principles of English culture and education.

On the second day was brought for the sixth time, the resolution on the reconstitution of Legislative Councils, moved this time by Lal Mohan Ghose. Lord Cross's Bill made no room whatever for the elected element insisted on so much, and Pandit Madan Mohan said, they did want "that cruel mercy" and in answer to the objection of Lords Cross and Salisbury that the absence of a common faith made election impossible, the learned Pandit quoted the following beautiful lines as describing the unity in the desires of the people :

Taught by no priest, but by their beating hearts,
Faith to each other ; the fidelity
Of fellow wanderers in a desert place,

Who share the same dire thirst and therefore share
The scanty water ; the fidelity
Of men whose pulses leap with kindred fire,
Who in the flash of eyes, the clasp of hands
The speech that even in lying tells the truth
Of heritage, inevitable as past deeds,
Nay in the silent, bodily presence feel
The mystic stirring of a common life,
Which makes the many one. (Loud Cheers)

But the gods that be are not charmed by fine sentiments. That the diversity of faiths has been taken advantage of by them will be seen in a later chapter, and Sir John Strachey himself said once : "The truth plainly is that the existence side by side of these hostile creeds is one of the strong points in our political position in India."

It was now also that tickets were returned from "Belvidere." Mr. George Yule called it "a piece of gross insolence," the production of "some dogberry clothed in a little brief authority". The body of men to whom the thing was addressed were in no way inferior to any official in "honesty of purpose" or "devotion to the Queen". Mr. Yule is said to have visibly waxed red when he said : "Any instructions, therefore, which carry in their face, as these instructions do in my judgment an insinuation that we are unworthy to be visited by Government officials, I resent as an insult and I retort that in all the qualities of manhood we are as good as they." Two more facts must be mentioned as specially noteworthy. The Congress resolved to hold in 1892 a Session at London, though owing

to the impending general election, this was postponed. Mrs. Kadumbini Ganguli moved the vote of thanks to the Chairman, and this is the first time when a woman addressed from the Congress platform.

The Seventh Congress, attended by 812 delegates, was held in 1891 at Nagpur under the leadership of Mr. P. Ananda Charlu. The Councils resolution was moved by Mr. Surendranath in a finely reasoned speech, in which he pointed out the autocratic character of the Government, the fitness of the people to justify the demand for the expansion of Councils, and the great ease and celerity with which reforms long delayed could be carried, once India had power in the Councils of the realm. Mr. Tilak had charge of the military resolutions.

Allahabad began what was called by the President "the second cycle" of the Congress. It was inaugurated by Mr. Bonnerji who was the initiator of the first cycle also. The Lowther Castle, now the possession of the Maharaja of Darbhanga, was used for the Congress, and the event which created excitement and called for agitation was the Jury notification of Sir Charles Elliot. Mr. Bonnerji's address was styled "colourless" by some miserable Anglo-Indian Journal, but it was a most sober and highly persuasive analysis of the situation, chiefly of the Jury notification. The Councils question was taken up again with that admirable and touching

perseverance of the Congress, and Babu Surendranath used a phrase worth noting. He called it "the wider extension of Self-Government in this country". His peroration was most brilliant and was an appeal to Mr. Gladstone who was pledged to Home Rule for Ireland, to respond to the call of the great and multitudinous population of India. The separation of Judicial and Executive functions which more than once was put in the "Omnibus" came up separate this time, and was moved and seconded by Messrs. R. N. Mudholkar and Ambica Charan Mozumdar. Mr. Gokhale, speaking of the Simultaneous Examinations, and the promises made to the ear and broken to the heart, said: "I say it would be well for them to openly and publicly fling into the flames all these promises and pledges as so much waste paper, and tell us, once for all, that, after all, we are a conquered people, and can have no rights or privileges. . . . And unless the regime of distrust is soon changed, unless the policy of Government is inspired by more sympathetic feelings, darker days cannot but be in store for this poor country." These strong words of loyal admonition from the most courteous and considerate of the critics of Government were unheeded as so often again they were to be. He was harassed by police spies and regarded as a captious critic and cunning Maharratta. Even the birth of anarchism and the rise of the bomb cult did not point to the Government the necessity for prompt acceptance of advice and warning from persons who certainly knew better.

The next Congress was at Lahore in 1893. Distant as the place was, 867 delegates attended the Congress, and the presidency of Dadabhai Naoroji was bound to make it a success. He came laden with the good wishes of his Constituency, and the message of Michael Davitt, "Don't forget to tell your colleagues at the Congress that every one of Ireland's Home Rule Members in Parliament is at your back in the cause of the Indian people". Tremendous was the ovation accorded to the greatest chief of Indian public life, and only two more receptions could compare to it, the reception to Sir Henry Cotton and Sir S. P. Sinha, both at Bombay. The old, old question of Simultaneous Examinations was taken up again and Mr. Surendranath arraigned "the Government of India before the bar of English and Indian public opinion—before the bar of civilised humanity in all parts of the globe. For the history of the Civil Service question is one broken record of unbroken promises". Raja Rampal Singh pointed out that, after 35 years, it was found that 20 Indians were in the I. C. S. as compared with about 950 Europeans. This was in 1893. Mr. Abdur Rahim in 1917 says there are 61 held by Indians and 1350 held by Europeans in the I. C. S.

The Session was remarkable for the practical attempt made to put an end to a scandal which still remains, by the appointment of a Committee to formulate definite proposals of reform. Two of the foremost of Congress workers

and old advocates of the reform, Kalicharan Bannerji and Ambica Charan Mozumdar spoke on the subject. The latter showed that by the efforts of Raja Ram Mohan Rai, the functions were separated though they were re-united in 1858. Dr. Bahadurji moved the reconstruction of the Indian Civil Medical Service, and this was the earliest occasion when that question engaged the attention of the assembly. The scandal "of the exchange compensation allowance," "the crime of the 26th of June," as the Viceroy called it, was taken up, and Mr. Surendranath Bannerji said in words which are as true to-day as ever before: "We are the children of the soil, the helots of the land, the hewers of wood and the drawers of water, and we exist for the services, the gods of the bureaucracy . . . The country is ours and theirs; and India is for England and also for India; primarily for India and secondarily for England." But the Indian mind has changed considerably since, and part of Mr. Bannerji's utterance is certainly out of date.

Protest against the countervailing excise duties imposed on Indian cotton goods in the interests of Lancashire marked the chief excitement of the Madras Congress of 1894 under the presidency of Mr. Alfred Webb. A resolution prayed Her Majesty to veto the disenfranchisement inflicted on the Indian subjects in South Africa. This was the first of a long series of resolutions on that dismal story of South African grievances.

The Eleventh Congress of 1895, beginning the second decade of the Congress, was held at Poona, which had to wait 10 full years before it could receive the Congress. But it inaugurated quite successfully the second decade under the illustrious auspices of the standard-bearer of the Congress, Babu Surendranath Bannerji. 1584 delegates flocked to the historic capital in the December of that year. Mr. Bannerji, who as Mr. V. B. Bhide remarked, "held the foremost place in the hearts of what may be called, the hope and blossom of coming years—the hearts of many thousands of students," urged the importance and need of a constitution for the Congress, exposed the utter inadequacy of the Council reforms of 1892, complained of the "ostracism of a whole people" from the military careers, declared the urgent necessity for bringing Indian questions under the light of British party contention and wound up with a most magnificent peroration. The whole speech was a perfect specimen of the sustained superbness of Mr. Surendranath's eloquence and oratory. Pandit Madan Mohan, speaking on Expenditure, charged the Government of a series of wrongs and abuses, and said :

Hear him, ye Senates, hear this truth sublime
He who allows oppression shares the crime.

Mr. A. C. Muzumdar called the Exchange Compensation allowance "illegal gratification". The Act to amend the Legal Practitioners' Act was

before the Council, and it was proposed to invest the District Judges and Revenue Commissioners with the power to dismiss legal practitioners. This was a blow aimed at the legal class which has ever been the most powerful in India and to which mostly has belonged the initiation and leadership of public life in India. Mr. N. Subba Rao Pantulu of Madras moved the resolution against it and he was supported by Mr. N. M. Joshi and Rai Jotindra Nath Choudhuri.

The Twelfth Congress of 1896 at Calcutta under the lead of Mr. Rahimtoola Sayani took up the new subject of greater fiscal freedom to Local Governments and the injustice of the scheme then proposed for the re-organisation of the Educational Service. Messrs. Bal Gangadhar Tilak and A. M. Bose were the respective movers of the resolutions. Mr. Parameshwaram Pillai gave a galling list of disabilities of Indians in South Africa, and sent forth a piteous wail to do justice to India and maintain the self-respect of the Empire. Mr. Jogendra Chandra Ghose asked for the repeal of the Inland Emigration Act and drew a graphic picture of the miseries of coolies in the tea gardens of Assam. Another noteworthy resolution was moved by Mr. S. P. Sinha that no Chief should be deposed for maladministration until the charge has been established before a Public Tribunal so constituted as to command the confidence alike of the Government and the Indian Chiefs and Princes.

The Thirteenth Congress of 692 delegates met at Amraoti in 1897 under the presidency of Mr. (now Sir) C. Sankaran Nair. Messrs. Rand and Lieut. Ayerst had been recently murdered and the Congress met under the shadows of official suspicion and it seemed at one time that the Session might even be prohibited. Sir Sankaran Nair's address deserves to be carefully read. It was the utterance of a man remarkably independent, who could feel the degradation of the Indian in all the material concerns of his country. It dealt with the distress in Poona consequent on the plague measures taken there by the Government. Mr. Natu had sent formal complaints, but the outrages still went on until at last the President of the Plague Committee was assassinated. Mr. Tilak and two other editors were prosecuted and the Natu Bros. were kept in prison without any trial. Also a contingent of punitive police was stationed at Poona. Rusty weapons lost in the lumber of the Government's armoury were revived to deprive the citizens of their liberties. The Congress sent a very vehement protest against the *lettres de cachet* and stood by Mr. Tilak, the Natu Brothers and the others who suffered because of the coercive policy of the Government. Mr. Surendranath voiced the universal feeling in his speech moving Resolution XII. The Natu Brothers had been five months in prison when the resolution was passed, and Mr. Tilak judged by a jury of six Englishmen and three Indians was

sentenced by six, against three, and the great patriot was condemned to the life of a criminal.

The Amraoti Congress marked the commencement of what was known later as "Extremism". But nothing happened as yet within the Congress. It only marks to us the date. The plague measures, the letting loose of soldiers into the house which to the Indian is his temple, the wrong done to Mr. Tilak, the detention in gaol of the Natu Brothers began in Maharashtra the distress and discontent which leavened a school of Indian politics with bitterness, and engendered forces which led up to the "Unrest". It is not a mistake to say that these troubles gave rise to "Extremism" in Maharashtra, as the Partition gave rise to it in Bengal. It may be added in passing, that one does not like the word "Extremism," a coinage of our good brother, the Anglo-Indian.

The Congress of Amraoti was important also for the protest, of course unheeded, against the widening of the competence of the Sedition Act, with what results, we all know. The protest was continued by the Madras Congress which met the next Christmas with Mr. A. M. Bose as President. It fell to the lot of this Congress, to accord the welcome to Lord Curzon. The speeches of Mr. Surendranath Bannerji and others will show how many were the hopes he roused, and how friendly and pre-disposed were the people of the country he came to rule over. The usual resolutions were all

moved again and passed by that patient assembly. The address of Mr. Ananda Mohan Bose and his speech at the end, characterised by a sweetness and sincerity and moving eloquence, peculiarly his own, deserves to be read *in extenso*.

The Fifteenth Congress, presided over by Mr. R. C. Dutt and attended by 740 delegates, met at Lucknow. The reactionary policy of the City Municipality Act was strongly condemned by Mr. Surendranath Bannerji. This was the first of a series of measures which belied the rich promise of the early days of Lord Curzon's Viceroyalty. Mr. Bannerji said : "There is reaction in their policy, reaction in opinion, reaction along the entire line, reaction is the order of the day . . . They would fain undo the past, they would fain roll back the tide of progress which has set in with such irresistible force. Shall we let them, shall we permit them, to prove false to the noblest traditions of their race?" The Fifteenth Congress is notable for deciding upon the Congress Constitution, a question rather long deferred.

The Sixteenth Congress met at Batalaugh Hall, Lahore, under the presidency of Mr. Anandavarkar. The Seventeenth Congress, in 1901, which met at Calcutta under the lead of Mr. D. B. Wacha, was important for the great interest it roused in the question of Assam. About 471 delegates attended the Eighteenth Congress at Ahmedabad. It was marked by a most magnificent

presidential oration from Babu Surendranath, and the question which aroused special interest was the report of the Education Commission. The other resolutions were moved again or re-affirmed, and the same speeches were made on the same subjects. As constantly reminded, these subjects are still there and no arguments will conquer them.

The feeling against Lord Curzon and the political gloom this "brilliant" Viceroy did so much to foster were further increased when the Congress met at Madras in 1903 under the presidentship of Lal Mohan Ghose. The Delhi Darbar of Lord Curzon was notorious for the most flagrant distinctions between Indian and European, and even the Indian Princes were subjected to a "humiliation they had never before known". In addition to the Sedition Act which Sir James Fitz James Stephens had already widened in view of the growing spirit of the people, the Official Secrets Bill was passed, and then came the Universities Bill, officialising the seats of learning and making them only a part of the general inelastic wooden machinery of the Bureaucracy. The Congress was protesting, but Lord Curzon had known the Eastern people far too well to attach much importance to their protests. Mr. Bannerji was asked to move the resolution against the Universities Bill. The Madras Municipal Bill, another Act to limit the freedom of non-governmental corporations, was denounced as highly

“retrograde and revolutionary” by Mr. Krishnan Nair.

The feeling of deep resentment was unmistakably marked in the people during the year 1903. The repressive policy of Lord Curzon had landed the Government and the country into newer troubles, and the incessant activity of the Viceroy and his determination to carry through his will regardless of public opinion was watched with extreme fear and anxiety. The Bombay Congress which met in 1904 was very near the climax of Curzonianism in the Partition of Bengal, and the Twentieth Session closed not only the second decade of the Congress, but also the older era of our political life. The year 1905 marks the birth of a new spirit, the breaking of a new dawn, and we shall soon see the people of the land beholding the Vision of Political Freedom.

The report of the Twentieth Congress speaks of the reactionary and repressive policy of the Government, and of the conviction growing among the people that Lord Curzon was one of the bitterest enemies of educated India. The Universities Act and the Official Secrets Act were followed by proposals for the partition of Bengal. The Province refused to be partitioned and expressed its refusal in the most emphatic and unmistakable terms. The Bombay Congress in 1904 was presided over by Sir Henry Cotton, whose love of Bengal had got him the sobriquet of “White Babu”. He

had won, as Sir P. M. Mehta said, a Governorship over the hearts of the people, and his presidency over an important Session of the Congress at a time when repression and reaction hung on the country like a funeral shroud, was bound to make the session highly popular and successful. It was no wonder, therefore, that 1010 delegates and thousands of visitors attended the National Assembly. Sir Henry was one of the very first to say from the Congress platform: "Autonomy is the keynote of England's true relations with her great Colonies. It is also the keynote of India's destiny." But he put Self-Government at a dim and distant future. This was in the conventional vein. But only two years had to elapse for the most authoritative and epoch-making pronouncement to be made on the subject. The Congress was characterised throughout by great enthusiasm and Mr. Bannerji's speech on the public services led the Resolutions. The usual resolutions were passed as usual, but the anti-partition resolution roused interest and excitement, though the speeches on the subject were few and short. A year was to pass away and the Congress was to begin a new era. New forces were engendered, new schools sprang up, and politics became no longer a matter of protests and resolutions, of petitions and memorials, but was nerved and vitalised with action, resolve, and doggedness, with Swadeshism, Boycott, Passive Resistance. It is this evolution into a newer phase, this embarking upon seas yet untravelled, this

outgrowth of the earlier conceptions, which stirred up the "Unrest" or the "New Spirit".

CHAPTER IV

Partition of Bengal and the Surat Split

"The Universities Act, however much it was disliked by political and intellectual India, was not a measure which left very much opening for an appeal to popular passion. But the impending partition of Bengal provided the necessary pretext, and the men who resented the curtailment of their baneful influence in educational matters found in an innocent administrative rearrangement the chance for a mischievous crusade." These are the words with which an apologist of Lord Curzon and the Bureaucracy, of which he was the archpontiff, tries to explain the motive of the stormy agitation against a most mischievous piece of administrative blundering. But the people of Bengal who were fully supported by the entire country knew the motive of the Government and their own motives better than

Mr. Lovat Fraser. But they were quite obliged to it, and even declared that the Partition was an event for National rejoicing. Babu Surendranath once hailed Lord Curzon as the architect of the Indian Nation. But none of them had any doubts as to where the real vindictiveness lay.

The repressive policy of Lord Curzon began with his second term of Viceroyalty. Even in 1899 he inaugurated his Viceroyalty with a reduction of the elected members of the Calcutta Corporation to half their original number. Public protests were of no avail with the brilliant but erratic pro-Consul. This was followed by some drastic measures against misbehaviour of some soldiers, which won the Viceroy the gratitude of India and the execrations of a section of the Anglo-Indian Press. But the second term of his office witnessed the abolition of the Competitive tests for the P. C. S., the Universities Act which, with all its high pretensions, only curtailed higher education and officialised the Universities, the Official Secrets Act, another inroad on the public Press, the announcement that Indians must be content with the few offices they held, even which, it was held, had no precedent in all history ancient or modern, and the "pettifogging spirit" in which the Queen's Proclamation was interpreted. Nowhere was agitation against these reactionary measures more earnest and unceasing than in Bengal, the birthplace and the home

of political agitation. Lord Curzon's Viceregal nature was highly sensitive to criticism, and when he found that his measures were denounced with a vehemence, fearlessness and eloquence equal to his own, he forged the Partition of Bengal and its announcement fell like a bomb-shell on the premier Province of India.

The feeling of Bengal was stirred to its very depths. Never before was known so sudden and so universal an uprising of public feeling. Prince and peasant, rich and poor, men of all creeds and classes, the most sober-minded men who never took part in public agitation—all joined the struggle. From December, 1903, to October, 1905, 2000 public meetings were held in both the Bengals. Hindus and Muslims took part in the meetings and from 500 to 50,000 people used to attend them. Lord Curzon became more and more nervous and in February, 1905, fired away his Convocation Address in which he indicted the Eastern people accusing them of want of truthfulness. In March a protest meeting was held presided over by Dr. Rash Behari Ghose, and the Viceroy's retrograde steps were openly condemned. But the Viceroy would not brook this, assumed the roll of an agitator, and addressed large meetings of Muslims in East Bengal and told them that his Partition scheme was meant to create a Muslim Province, where Muslim interests would be given preferential treatment and where Islam would be predominant.

Thus did the Vice-Regent of H. M. descend to the level of dividing his subjects and it was no wonder that some of the leading Muhammadans seceded from the anti-partition movement. Nor was it strange that incidents were neither few nor far between of Muhammadans violating the sanctity of Hindu temples, of their rioting against Hindus and their open plunders and molestations in certain parts of Bengal. The belief was that the Sirkar would tolerate anything done against the Hindus. And the most outrageous scandal of it was that when called up before a Magistrate for the offences, the penalty which in the case of a Muslim was nominal was crushing in the case of the Hindu.

The people of Bengal would not brook all this. They were determined to stand together and declared that Bengal was "one and indivisible". They found that protests and prayers ungraciously rejected, that the best among them had little of respect to expect from the Government. They took the vow of Swadeshi, and Krishna Kumar Mitra openly preached boycott of foreign goods in his *Sannibaji*. The *Rakhi* was tied and the oath was taken; and Bengal declared Passive Resistance. Lord Curzon had roused a storm he could not quell. He left India in 1905 without even paying the usual visit to the Capital.

II

This was the state of affairs when the Congress met at Benares under the Presidentship

of Mr. Gokhale in 1905. It met at a great crisis in the political fortunes of the country. "Never since the dark days of Lord Lytton's Viceroyalty had India been so distracted, discontented, despondent; the victim of so many misfortunes, political and other; the target for so much scorn and calumny emanating from the highest quarters—its moderate demands ridiculed and scouted, its most reasonable prayers greeted with a stiff negative, its noblest aspirations spurned and denounced as pure mischief or solemn nonsense, its most cherished ideals hurled down from their pedestal and trodden under foot—never had the condition of India been more critical than it was during the second ill-starred administration of Lord Curzon." Mr. Gokhale had to lead the Congress "with rocks ahead and waves beating around". His address was a most masterly one and remarkable for the splendid analysis of Lord Curzon's Viceregal personality. The comparison with Aurangzeb was a master-stroke. The presidential remarks on the Partition, characterised by weight of judgment and fairness of exposition, showed that the troubles of one Province would be shared by the other Provinces and that Bengal's demand was armed with the potency of the national voice of all India. His remarks on Swadeshi are full of feeling and his interpretation of it is in full consonance with its high sacredness.

The chief resolutions of the Session were those relating to the Partition and repressive

measures in Bengal. In one of his most fervid speeches Mr. Bannerji moved the resolution against the Partition. The speech was received with storms of applause and showed how it had become a National question. In Bengal "it is the talk of the market-place; it is the gossip of the family circle; it is the burden of popular song; it is the theme of the inspiring eloquence of popular oratory". Amidst loud cries of shame the Speaker declared that Lord Curzon sought to bring about the disintegration of our race and to destroy the solidarity of our public opinion. He declared to the delegates of East Bengal that the stroke of autocracy brought the hearts of all Bengalis nearer. "Who can sunder those who are tied by the bonds of Nature? The omnipotence of Government quails before the Majesty of Heaven." He then referred to their disregarded petitions and said, "in utter desperation, as a last resort, we were driven to the adoption of the Boycott, the policy of Passive Resistance which represents a memorable departure in our political programme". Then came the shameful story of repression, the Carlyle Circular honoured since by thousand curses, prohibition of public meetings with guns and bayonets, and of Sankeertan parties, penalisation of the singing of Vande Mataram, enrolment of respectable people as special constables, the posting of Gurkha regiments in peaceful cities, the reign of terror in Serajganj and Barisal, the prosecution of school-boys—and all that dismal and tragic tale which

culminated in a few years in the rise of anarchism in Bengal.

Pandit Madan Mohan moved the resolution against Repression in Bengal. Talking of the thorny question of Boycott, he said that it would be unwise to use it generally all over India, that it was meant only for Bengal where petitions and memorials had been persistently disregarded, and he held out the salutary warning that Boycott, which was a temporary political weapon of recent origin, should not be confused with Swadeshi which was a patriotic principle nearly thirty years old. He added: "Let the Government undo the great mischief which has been done by this unnecessary partition, and Boycott, as a boycott, will cease to-morrow." It is well that we note this because on this question as on one or two others was based the difference between the two Wings of the Nationalist Party to be known hereafter as "Moderates" and "Extremists". The feeling of the audience, as a glance through the Report could show, was at fever heat. At no other session of the Congress so far was such indignation felt and so many cries of shame so frequently heard. A sense of bitterness was already born, and the national consciousness of the people which had almost attained its maturity was in conflict with all the thousand forces of the Bureaucracy. Lord Curzon's stand as protagonist of the latter and the twelve problems with which he wanted to recreate the

administration did most to embitter the situation. The memories of Poona were not dead. They had been keenly cherished, as could be seen from the ovation Mr. Tilak received at Benares. Now came the forces of the Partition. Benares saw clearly the premonitions of the storm to come.

Once more the revered and ancient Chief of India answered the country's call and presided for the last time over the deliberations of the Congress. By far the most brilliant session of the Congress was the twenty-second which met in 1906 in Calcutta. Dr. Rash Behari Ghose, the eminent Jurist and scholar, who rarely took any part in active political agitation but was drawn into it by the distresses of Bengal, was the Chairman of the Reception Committee and welcomed the delegates. 1663 men had travelled from every part of British India, full of anxious and painful concern in the affairs of their country. Besides these representatives of the people, 20,000 visitors had crowded themselves into the pavilion and the enthusiasm of the vast assembly passed all bounds.

Another year of repression had passed away since the Congress met at Benares. All Bengal had been seething with discontent and anger at the attempt of Lord Curzon to break their long-established unity. The new ideals and watchwords which, as Mr. Surendranath said at the previous Congress, "marked a memorable departure

in our political programme," had sunk deeper and spread wider all over Bengal and the Province was one blaze of indignation. During these moments of supreme agony the Anglo-Indian papers went on reviling and slandering with impunity. It has always been a crying shame that these calumniators of the country on whose salt they prey never have the courage and ordinary decency to write without masquerading themselves in anonymous and pseudonymous names. The Partition was declared by no less a man than Lord Morley to be a settled fact. The confidence which the Indians had learnt to repose in the liberalism of Lord Morley was shown to be sorely misplaced. It was commonly felt that, if the greatest Liberal thinker of England, the biographer of Gladstone, and the disciple of Mill, could not defer to public opinion, which according to his own testimony was here most clearly and most indignantly expressed, if even he could not put an end to the repressive policy which was a lasting disgrace to the traditions of the British Empire, then there was no hope for this ill-fated land. Such were the feelings with which the 20,000 men thronged the expansive pavilion and such the intensity of the situation the Congress was to confront. But the appeal of the crisis was bound to evoke a varied response from the hearts of men. The response was governed by all the various distinguishing traits of men, by temperament, by training and by tradition. It is this variety in response which

gave the point to the Twenty-second Congress and precipitated the dissolution at Surat.

Dadabhai Naoroji's presidential address which was the most momentous of all the Congress pronouncements declared for the first time the battle-cry of Swaraj. The leading investigation and discovery of his long and laborious career had been the grinding poverty, due to "the drain," of the millions of our people. He had often said that the opening out of the Public Services to Indians without distinctions of race would put a stop to the enormous drain which was eating into the vitals of the country. He had also pointed out, in the Second Congress for example, that the granting of expanded Legislative Councils with a considerable elected element in them would procure through legislation the remedial of that grinding poverty. Many years had now elapsed, and none of the principal reforms demanded were yet conceded. On the other hand the freedom of the people was narrowed more and more and coercion spread its baleful shadows over the country. Dadabhai's mind, which was of that original cast which instead of stiffening, grows and evolves with age, had now come to the belief that the rights of full citizenship were due to the people as a reparation for what they had endured and suffered. He said that "the British would not allow themselves to be subjected for a single day to such an unnatural system of Government as the one which has been

imposed upon India for nearly a century and a half". He quoted the various pronouncements and proclamations on the subject of Indian freedom and said that Indians claimed those promised rights and demanded that Indians should have in their country the power and control which other people have in theirs. It was "absolutely necessary". "The whole matter can be comprised in one word, Self-Government, or Swaraj, like that of the United Kingdom or the Colonies." How long were we to wait, to the dim and distant time which shall never be? "Not only has the time fully arrived, but had arrived long past."

Turning to the questions which were to be discussed at the Congress, he called once more for Simultaneous Examinations which would make the Government Indian, for representation living and worth its high name, for just financial relations which to be established only needed "the determination and will of the British Government to do justice". Were Indians to remain, he asked, "under a barbarous system of despotism, unworthy of British instincts, principles and civilisation?" He advised constant, unceasing and persistent agitation, agitation which "is the civilised peaceful weapon of moral force". He concluded with words which must sink deep into the heart of every true Indian, words of inspiring message from India's noblest Son.

"Self-Government is the only and chief remedy. In Self-Government lie our hope, strength

and greatness. . . . I do not know what good fortune may be in store for me during the short period that may be left to me, and if I can have a word of affection and devotion for my country and countrymen, I say: Be united, persevere, and achieve Self-Government, so that the millions now perishing by poverty, famine and plague, and the scores of millions that are starving on scanty subsistence may be saved, and India may once more occupy her proud position of yore among the greatest and civilised nations of the West."

This Session had to mourn the loss of some of the best patriots, W. C. Bonnerji, Badrud'din Tyabji, Ananda Mohan Bose and Viraraghava-chariar.

The usual resolutions were moved again, but the indignant feelings of a wounded nation gave them a tone and temper rather new and unfamiliar. But the principal resolutions which were the subject of very serious and excited discussion, which marked the temper of the nation and which were to be among the causes of the Surat Split were four in number, the resolutions on Self-Government, Boycott, Swadeshi and National Education. The Congress said that "the system of Government obtaining in the British Colonies" should be extended to India, and that, as steps leading to it, some reforms should be immediately carried out. These were (a) Simultaneous Examinations, (b) adequate representation in Executive Councils, (c) expansion of

Legislative Councils and (d) extension of Local Self-Government (and official control over Local Municipal bodies was not to be more than what is exercised by the Government Board in England). The Swadeshi was purely a patriotic vow and was known for thirty years, but it received now the sanction and authority of the Congress. National education was conditioned by the Universities Act which officialised education and by the rustication of schoolboys which went on indiscriminately in Bengal. The resolution was moved by Mr. Hirendra Nath Datta. "Trust not your education to aliens," he said, "in native souls and native hands, the only hope of succour rests".

The debate on the Boycott resolution naturally caused exceeding excitement. The more moved and indignant among the delegates wanted to use it as a powerful weapon against the Government by widening its scope of operation to honorary offices and association with the Government. Also they wanted that all India should adopt the extreme form of Passive Resistance so that administration in the land might become impossible. But the sense of the Congress was against it. And when after heated discussion the resolution was about to be put to the vote, some sixty of the malcontents rushed out of the Hall. They left no perceptible void, says Ambica Charan Muzamdar exultingly, in an assembly of 20,000 men. But they showed the

measure of popular indignation and signified the birth of forces bound to be potent in the future. It was the prelude of Surat.

The resolution protesting against the Partition of Bengal was moved by the premier noble man of Dacca, the brother of Nawab^c Shalimullah, and Mr. Surendranath hailed him as "henceforth, the Captain-General of the campaign against the Partition". Nawab Athiculla emphatically declared that, except a few leading Muslims, who, for ends of their own, seceded to the camp of the opponents, the mass of the Islamic community was with the Hindus in their hostility to the Partition. Mr. Bannerji, in seconding the resolution, delivered a most fervid oration, cheered at every pause, and the thunder-voiced orator showed how much indignation India felt against the obnoxious measure.

The Congress came to a close on the 29th of December with a speech from Mr. Dadabhai, in which the Grand Old Man appealed to the young to fight out the struggle and win that Swaraj which was India's rightful due.

II

The secesion of a few delegates and their refusal to be party to the defeat of Boycott in its more extended sense was the first open expression of vital difference in the Congress camp. The years that had elapsed had tired the patience of the more unquiet spirits and they had begun to

despair of the value of the methods of constitutional agitation. It became known as "begging" policy, more euphoniously still as "mendicant policy". They had been seeing the agitation of thirty years bearing fruit in a few minor reforms of little or no significance. The Congress had laboured hard and with admirable patience and fortitude for about 22 years, but what were its substantial results on the side of gaining reforms from the Government? It had roused National spirit and focussed the National sentiment. But were the reforms demanded by this growing spirit of the Nation conceded to the loyal and deserving people? On the other hand, repression stalked naked and the accession of liberal statesman did but little to check it. But the growing consciousness of the people would not be daunted. The recent examples of China, Persia, and, above all, of Japan, had shattered to the dust the time-honoured fallacies of the incompetence of eastern peoples to initiate and maintain western methods of Government. The rise of Native States to the very highest requirements of modern standards of Government and life, as exemplified in the case of Baroda, showed still further the competence for Self-Government, as also the possibilities of greater improvement when Indians had unfettered control over their National affairs. The more advanced school, full of these thoughts, declared for Self-Government or Swaraj. The *Bande Mataram*, which was the accredited organ of that School, declared:

“The time has come when, in the interests of truth and the civic advancement and the freedom of the people, our British friends should be distinctly told that while we are thankful to them for all the kind things they have said all these years for us and the ready sacrifice they have made to make our lot easy and their yoke light, we cannot any longer suffer to be guided by them in our attempts for political progress and emancipation. Their weapon is not ours; they desire to make the Government in India popular. They desire to make the Government of India popular without ceasing in any sense to be essentially British. We desire to make it autonomous, absolutely free of the British Parliament.”

This was the ideal of Swaraj that the “Extremist” school of politicians declared to the astonishment of Anglo-India, which simply went to hysterics over it. Then Dadabhai Naoroji declared at Calcutta for Swaraj or “Self-Government as in the United Kingdom or in the Colonies”. He also proclaimed India’s fitness to have that freedom then and there. This pronouncement from a man so highly honoured strengthened the Swarajists’ school very considerably.

But the grievous part of it was with respect to two very important circumstances. Strong and vital differences arose as to the import of Dadabhai’s ideal. Was it Self-Government or Swaraj according to the declaration of the *Bande*

Mataram, autonomy absolutely free and independent of the British Parliament? Or, was it Swaraj in the sense of Colonial Self-Government under the British paramountcy? The "Moderate" school said it was the latter, and the "Extremist" school stood for the former. Here was a fundamental difference bound to disturb the peace of India and of its "un-conventional Convention," the Congress. Secondly, the "Extremist" school of Arabindo Ghosh, Tilak and Pal maintained that Swaraj was an immediate practicability. It was not with them a distant ideal veiled in the mists of the unseen future. It was not a fancy they loved in the solitary chambers of their heart, or a delusion they hugged in the raptures of their idealistic imagination. Here and now, at once, without the least tardiness or delay, Self-Government *is* possible. Also it is imperatively *needed*. The "Moderates," on the other hand, worshipped it as an ideal to which India moved. Mr. Gokhale said at Allahabad in one of his very momentous speeches that he yielded to none in his aspiration for Self-Government. But all that was wanted could be had under the ægis of the British Empire. What was more, they were not immediately attainable with the many, many defects in our National life. We shall have to wait and keep a long and dreary vigil, not before we get Self-Government but before we are even fit for it. Messrs. Mehta, Gokhale, Rash Behari Ghose all belonged to this school. But the greatest worker in the country's

cause, to whom all owed allegiance, the man whose knowledge of its problems and needs was certainly greater, Dadabhai Naoroji, had emphatically declared: "Not only has the time fully arrived, but had arrived long past."

Naturally the school which said that we were fit for Self-Government here and now was bound to make headway. They were getting more and more popular. The "Moderates" were certainly annoyed at their growing popularity. It seemed they would capture the Congress and the more sober men felt that their ascendancy would mean the ascendancy of ideals which might wreck political life in India altogether. For frankly, the "Extremists" had become simply disgusted with the well-worn methods of work, passing of resolutions at annual Congresses. They had seen all the common forms and resources of constitutional agitation exhausted before their very eyes. They had become frankly disgusted with "the damnable iteration" of the faith of the Congress in the liberal statesmanship of England. The correctness or incorrectness of this school, as also the correctness of the many people who hold similar views on the subject to-day, will be judged by the long result of time. But then, as now, utterances of liberal statesmen justified the decadence of that faith. Lord Curzon's antics are well known. It was expected that Lords Morley and Minto would reverse the Curzonian policy, the mischievousness of which was indirectly acknowledged by

the former as the Secretary of State for India. But "Honest John" not only disposed of the Partition as a "settled fact," but delivered himself of a declaration which unless excused by gross ignorance of Indian affairs would ever stand an ineffaceable shade on the otherwise luminous escutcheon of his lofty liberalism. He said, "so far as my imagination can see, so far India must continue to be under a personal and absolute Government". What more was needed to shake the faith of a people whose being was filled with that life, that strength and that invincibility which comes to the people who have beheld the beatific vision of the Goddess of Freedom? No wonder then that Passive Resistance on a wide and aggressive scale, and Boycott of a comprehensive kind were declared the most powerful weapons left to a peaceful, law-abiding, defenceless but determined people. The "Moderate" School, however, possessed their souls in patience and equanimity. They felt their old methods could yet be effective. Here again on the point of methods was a wide and vital divergence.

These causes were bound to tell upon the peace of public life. It seemed inevitable. ~~Temper~~ were to clash like flint and steel, and we shall soon hear the clang of arms.

It is perhaps well that before closing this section, I refer to the achievements so far of the Congress. I shall do best to summarise what Sir P. M.

Mehta said as Chairman of the Remittee in 1904 at Bombay in scoring of the movement :

Our earliest efforts were directed towards securing a platform from which we might collectively expound our views. They were the Councils Act of 1892. The voice of the Congress could secure the Commission into Indian expenditure. The departmental Examinations succeeded the success of Mr. Herbert Paul's motion in the House of Commons. The Commission, though its recommendations go far enough and were further accepted by the Government of India, still laid down principles. We have pressed upon the Government the problem of poverty, and the trying to devise some remedies. The essential desirability of the separation of the judicial from the Executive function was admitted by Dufferin to be "a caution". We pointed out the abuses of the Revenue Department, and the Police Commission endorsed our national view. We pointed out the need of technical education to the Government and we have forced it on both in various ways. We have pressed upon the Government the great cause of temperance. We have pointed out the reduction in the burden of income-tax, both of which refer

Sir Pherozeshah said amidst honourable record. It is a room for disappointment or quoted those lines of beautiful Clough :

ired waves are vainly breaking,
 painful inch to gain,
 creeks and inlets making
 ding in, the main."

added what Mr. Gokhale said was. He pointed out that the Service was raised from 19 sessions of the Congress had an that it had given more of public life.

hta and Gokhale were satisfied, though, of course, they again that there was great But the achievements so letting Commissions of enquiry so much to a knowledge of result in no substantial gain tion. The raising of the age comparison with the larger vices. The Councils Act did to satisfy the wishes of the ainly were far from being amments, such as they were, were on with the labours of the hts and fitness of the people.

The Extreme School was impressed much with the latter views and was anxious to resort to Boycott and Passive Resistance setting aside the methods of "co-operating with the Government" which to them appeared to be quite ineffective. These and other differences were kept alive all through the years following upon the Twenty-second Congress at Calcutta. Speeches were made to crowded audiences by the leaders of both parties, and the leading organs kept discussing the issues involved. He would be an uncharitable critic who would read into these criticisms anything of personal feelings of ill-will. Nor was it quite inevitable that these differences, fundamental as they were, should shake the harmony of our political life. They were grave differences or grave issues, the expression once more of that variety of human temperament, the action and counter-action of which have maintained the balance of society in all countries and in all ages. They could have existed side by side, and the country could have chosen one or other of the schools of thought. But that was not to be. Incidents of a purely accidental character precipitated the saddest event in the history of the Congress, the break-up of its harmony in the year 1907 at Surat. One loves to think that the dark and often unknown world of human motives had nothing to do with that lamented dissolution. We cannot say ought for certain, but this is true, that the catastrophe might have been averted were it not for certain accidents which we shall presently examine. The

two schools of thought, both of which were equally honourable, could possibly have kept together or later re-united if the repressive policy of the Government had not broken the Extremist School with all that sad and tragic tale of deportations without number.

III

The Twenty-third Congress was invited to Nagpur at Calcutta. But owing to some local differences the *venue* was changed to Surat. Tribhavan Das Malvi was the Chairman of the Reception Committee. The virulence of the differences had been so great through the year that the cleavage between the parties seemed certain. But the whole journey from Calcutta to Surat of the Congress train which carried the President and the principal delegates of Bengal was marked with scenes of unparalleled enthusiasm. Great crowds assembled at the various stations to offer their respects to the President-elect for the year. As Mr. H. W. Nevinson has very finely described, "It was roses, roses all the way". Even on the opening day, all promised success and peace, for as the leading delegates entered the pavilion escorting the President-elect, there were waves on waves of applause from the vast assemblage. The proceedings began as usual with the welcoming address of Mr. Malvi who made pointed reference to the repressive and distrustful policy of the Government and concluded by advising moderation

and firmness. The advice was quite unwelcome to the party impatient under repression and bitterly conscious of the futility of the struggles in the past. Then Dr. Ghose was proposed to the chair in the usual way by Ambalal S. Desai and there were some cries of "no, no," when the speaker referred to the excellences of the President-elect. When Mr. Surendranath came up to the platform, he would not be allowed to speak. One wonders why, for he was the only leader of importance who had personally conferred with and even gratified Mr. Tilak. Possibly, the minority bent upon disturbance felt that his oratory might win the day. Who does not remember Cecho Del Vechio of Lytton's 'Rienzi,' crying out to the excited mob not to listen lest Rienzi's eloquence should defeat their purpose? There was such an uproar on all sides that even the voice of Mr. Surendranath which once dominated the Heavens could not be heard. The Congress was adjourned to the next day in the hope that excitement might subside. Mr. Bannerji began where he left on the next day, and after his speech Mr. Ghose took the chair. Now Mr. Tilak reached up to the platform and wanted to move the adjournment of which he had given notice in a pencil chit sent by him to the Chairman of the Reception Committee when Dr. Ghose was being escorted in procession. It was an amendment for the adjournment of the Congress. The Chairman quite properly ruled it out of order, as the amendment to adjourn the sitting came when a proposition electing the President was moved.

Mr. Tilak, after some parley with Mr. Ghose, appealed "from the President to the delegates". An uproar was created, and a number of excited delegates rushed on him, when he declined to leave the platform unless "bodily removed". Mr. Nevinson says that Mr. Gokhale rushed to Mr. Tilak with extended arms trying to protect him from the angry men, but Mr. Tilak stood by himself, with arms crossed on his chest, coolly facing the seething crowd and declining all protection. Mr. Tilak refused to sit as ordered by the President, who, finding that a number of his followers were rushing to the platform with sticks in hand, called upon him once more to resume his seat. At this time a shoe was hurled from the Hall, which struck both Sir P. M. Mehta and Mr. Surendranath Bannerji who were both sitting side by side. Chairs were hurled towards the platform and disorder grew until at last the President found himself constrained to suspend the proceedings *sine die*.

IV

It is a most arduous and hazardous task to distribute praise and blame for this sad and disgraceful episode in the glorious record of the Congress. Any attempt to state opinions frankly as gathered in a judicial spirit from various independent sources is sure to hurt feelings which one would rather conciliate. Nor would it serve any but a pernicious purpose to sift evidences and pronounce judgments on the principal actors of the tragedy. Most happily for the country's cause, the cleavage

has been cemented, and the parties sundered a decade ago have met again and mingled their aspirations in one community of determination and faith.

But we shall just refer to one or two circumstances which might mitigate the feelings of both the parties. In the first place, it must be remembered, that there was a rumour from November onwards that the four momentous resolutions of the Calcutta Congress were to be dropped at Surat. It is because of this rumour, which however unfounded, was serious enough to need verification, that Mr. Tilak and his associates so incessantly called for a copy of the draft resolutions. They were not supplied with it until far too late an hour, and at a time when party feeling was high it was only natural that the inordinate delay in producing the draft was misunderstood. And Mr. Gokhale's reasons for the delay which are quite convincing came out only after the break-up. As for the objections to the four resolutions as they were on the draft, it must be admitted that though in some cases the differences from those of Calcutta were accidental and in others quite explicable, still a party living, as all did, in an atmosphere of partisanship, might naturally misunderstand the omissions and modifications as due rather to some deliberate motive than to the causes which were explained only later.

The shoe which was the really disgraceful part of it has been supposed to have been hurled by an

Extremist, simply because it hurt Babu Surendranath and Sir P. M. Mehta. But is it impossible that it was aimed against Mr. Tilak himself, as rendered likely by the circumstances amidst which it was hurled? Again, what reason was there *then* to imagine that Mr. Bannerji was a Moderate of the school of Messrs. Mehta, Wacha and Gokhale.

The slip which has been incorrectly supposed to have been missing was really delivered as stated by the official version of the incidents. It ~~called~~ called for an adjournment after Mr. Surendranath had spoken and was no doubt out of order. But why did not Mr. Malvi send a reply to Mr. Tilak in time, instead of ruling him out of order, when he came up on the platform?

The Presidentship of Dr. Ghose was questioned by Mr. Tilak on grounds quite reasonable and worth respectful consideration. It was true that he had the votes of the majority, but that did in no way weaken the chief argument for Lala Lajput Rai's presidency. It was felt strongly in certain quarters that the election to the chair of the Congress of a patriot most unjustly deported would be the best and most effective protest against the policy of repression on which the Government had embarked. This view may be aptly likened to the argument to-day and at the time of the Lucknow Congress for Mrs. Besant's election to the Presidential chair. It must be said in fairness that

once that patriotic Lala refused battle flag, Mr. Tilak did not persist but only wanted that one of the sitting Dr. Ghose to the chair should make a graceful reference to the patriot. This, Babu Surendranath himself consented to do, and would have caused the uproar against him.

These things are written not in praise and blame to which I lay claim but only to show that the common opinion of Mr. Tilak on this score is highly exaggerated and unjustified. It only remains to say that Mr. Tilak was willing to concede the very commencement. The four resolutions would be omitted by the fact of their omission at the Provincial Conference, and also the list of the subjects to be discussed was officially published did not raise any questions. It must be remembered that Gokhale's reasons came only after the resolutions were accomplished. Fearing that the *status quo* would be disturbed, the "Extremists" agreed that all constitutional means the distance. Rai undertook to arrange for a committee of delegates. But no kind of information came from him as to the result of his mission. On the 26th Mr. Tilak and some others went to Babu Surendranath and

be maintained and (2) that a should be made to Lajput Rai. ised the latter as he was elf, assured them of Bengal's ormer, and asked them for the khale or Mr. Malvi. Mr. Malvi e than once, but he could not al again was asked by Mr. Tilak interview with Mr. Gokhale, but eived from him in reply. Dr. kept an engagement at Prof. the reconciliation, but owing to ements he could not also come. Mr. Chuni Lal undertook to talk preliminary Committee with Sir t. Rutherford, but returned saying be done. It was when all these r. Tilak sent the chit to which he when reminded by Mr. Kelkar. east show that Mr. Tilak tried reconciliation, but he could not causes, we hope, purely acci- he it stated in the "Extremist ver- ning was arranged to be done oy silent voting and division of signatories of that version are and we may well believe that be the last man to sanction

V

created might have destroyed ever but for the resourcefulness

and statesmanship of the "Moderate" leaders. The more leading among them deliberated together and decided to call a Convention of delegates who were agreed—

(1) that the goal of our political aspirations is to attain Self-Government similar to that enjoyed by the Self-Governing Colonies of the Empire ;

(2) that the advance towards the goal is to be strictly constitutional, by bringing about a steady reform in the existing system of Government, by the promotion of National unity and improving the condition of the mass of the people ; and

(3) that all meetings held for the promotion of these objects should be conducted in an orderly manner.

Of the 1600 delegates who were supposed to have attended the Surat Congress, some 900 subscribed to the Articles and attended the Convention. On the motion of Sir P. M. Mehta, seconded by Babu Surendranath and Lajput Rai, Dr. Rash Behari Ghose took the chair. Mr. Gokhale moved for a Committee of about 100 names to draw up a constitution for the Congress. Sir P. M. Mehta, Messrs. Gokhale and Wacha were appointed Secretaries. Dr. Ghose then dissolved the Convention. The Anglo-Indian papers rejoiced at the break-up and moralised that the Surat "fiasco" was a conclusive proof of India's incompetence for Self-Government. But the fact is, as Mrs. Besant has pointed out : "It seems to

us that the quickness of recovery, the prompt action, the businesslike procedure, were far better proofs of their fitness than the conducting of peaceful meetings. To meet an unexpected emergency, to grapple with it, and to secure the continuity of the Congress showed statesmanship and judgment, and we should like to know what better procedure could have been followed."

The Constitution was drawn up by the Committee at Allahabad in April, 1908. A set of rules was also drawn up. That Constitution and those rules have been followed by subsequent Congresses. They were confirmed by the entire body at Allahabad in 1910. It became necessary thereafter for delegates to be elected by a few recognised and affiliated bodies, and what was more, each delegate had to subscribe to a stated "creed". He had to promise to abide by the Constitution and the Rules. The Creed ran: "The objects of the Indian National Congress are the attainment by the people of a system of Government similar to that enjoyed by the self-governing members of the British Empire, and a participation by them in the rights and responsibilities of the Empire on equal terms with those members. These objects are to be achieved by constitutional means by bringing about a steady reform of the existing system of administration, and by promoting National unity, fostering public spirit and developing and organising the intellectual, moral, economic and industrial resources of the country."

CHAPTER V

The Convention Congress

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I

The first Congress, according to the Constitution drawn up by the Committee at Allahabad, met at Madras in 1908. It was treated only as the re-assembling of the Session adjourned *sine die* at Surat. Dr. Rash Behari Ghose presided over its deliberations. Though the "Extremists" were all absent, the ex-Presidents were present and the country sent up 626 delegates. It was in many ways an eventful Session. The policy of repression went on unchecked, and deportations of respectable citizens without ever an opportunity of trial were becoming common. The Bureaucracy never before stood so discredited in the eyes of the people. Anarchism raised its grisly head in Bengal and the bomb was receiving its apotheosis. But there was a ray of sunshine which promised hope and peace. The outlines of Lord Morley's *Scheme of Reforms* were now published. The Congress welcomed the Scheme as a momentous instalment of progressive policy. But even these, it was feared, might be throttled by the rules framed by the "men on the spot". It was in these circumstances that the resurrected Congress resumed its deliberations.

The President's address was characterised by high forensic skill and flashes of caustic good humour. He spoke about "the succession of repressive laws and deportations under a lawless law". But the Reform Scheme promised a satisfactory beginning of Representative Government and Indians would henceforth have "an effective voice in directing the policy of the Government". He condemned in scathing terms the *lettres de cachet* system, "a barbarous relic from the past, an unweeded remnant which ought to have been extirpated long ago".

The most important resolution of this Congress was the one on the Reform Scheme of Lord Morley. It gave expression to the deep and general satisfaction with which the Reform proposals were received throughout the country. The Congress was of opinion that the proposed expansion of the Councils and admission of Indians constituted a large and liberal instalment of the reforms needed to give the people of the country a substantial share in the management of their affairs. The hope was expressed that the details to be worked out by the Government of India would be conceived in the same liberal spirit, a hope which like a hundred others was destined to be disappointed. Mr. Surendranath Bannerji moved the resolution. He said that there was felt in Bengal a loss of faith in the utility of constitutional agitation. He welcomed the reforms as a message of conciliation. He

referred to the deportations "abhorrent to minds wedded to constitutional methods of procedure and to the canons of law and justice". He added that the success or failure of the proposals depended entirely on the rules to be framed by the Government of India. Pandit Madan Mohan said that the reforms were not final and more and more would have to be demanded. Many other speakers spoke in the same vein, but the Scheme was soon to be neutralised.

Mr. Mushir Hasan Kidwai, a delegate from the Johannesburg British Indian Association, moved the resolution on the grievances in South Africa.

The Hon. Mr. Krishnan Nair moved and Babu A. C. Mozumdar seconded the resolution against the Partition. He said, referring to the repressive policy of the Government: "If anarchism has in every age and in every country failed to achieve the salvation of any people, repression has likewise nowhere succeeded, and in this country repression has so far only succeeded in converting prison-houses into martyrdoms."

Mr. Syed Hasan Imam moved the resolution against the *lettres de cachet*. He said that the deportations without trial shook the faith of the most loyal in the justice of the law. Mr. Bhupendra Nath Basu made a moving speech condemning the deportations.

Dr. Ghose, in his concluding speech, spoke of the enemies of India who were trying to thwart the Reform Scheme of Lord Morley. "The leopard may change his spots, but there is no hope for the Sun-dried Bureaucrat." So make organised efforts to counteract the mischievous efforts of the reactionaries.

The Twenty-fourth Congress met at Lahore under the Presidentship of Pandit Madan Mohan. The Councils Act of Lord Morley were by this time neutralised in their effects and the Congress, true to its traditions, voiced its most emphatic protests. "The Partition of Bengal was yet unmodified and Lahore demanded its unsettlement. The troubles in South Africa had become very serious, and the honour of the Motherland was being gallantly maintained by Mr. Gandhi and his comrades. The Twenty-fourth Congress called for funds and urged upon the Government the need for the prohibition of Indentured labour. There was severe protest against the continuance on the Statute Book of the disgraceful laws which deprived loyal citizens of their liberties.

The Congress of 1910 at Allahabad was remarkable for the presidency of Sir W. Wedderburn who came over to India to try a *rapprochement* between the Muhammadans and the other communities, as also between Moderates and Extremists. He sounded the watchwords of "Hope," "Conciliation," and "United effort".

He emphasised the identity of interest of all the sections of India and appealed to the Extremists not to lose faith in constitutional agitation. There were some very useful and well-considered amendments proposed on the reforms as shaped by the Government of India. The Congress hoped that the existing system of dividing electorates which was a strong divisive influence would be abandoned before the next elections. Long were the debates in the Committee on the question of the Council regulation and the Muhammadan leaders themselves admitted the disintegrating tendencies of the methods of election chosen by the Government. The South African grievances were again considered and the Partition of Bengal was again protested against. The release of political prisoners in view of the general improvement in the political situation was also demanded. The Resolution on Education called this time for indigenous effort, but the Congress is not to be congratulated on the dropping of the demand for National education. The Allahabad Congress had two more subjects for protest offered to it by an ever-obliging Bureaucracy, the Press Act and the Seditious Meetings Act. It is a grim irony that as the Congress protests against invasions on freedom, newer chains are forged, and the prison walls get closer. It is to be noted also, that, for the first time, a delegation was sent by the Congress to the Viceroy.

The next Congress at Calcutta was indubitably under the most happy auspices. The years

since Lord Minto's retirement were showing a gradual improvement. A liberal Viceroy was in charge of the country and the Reform Schemes had brought back the faith of large numbers of men. Happily, in the years of unrest in Bengal, the High Court of that Province was presided over by Sir Lawrence Jenkins. The Partition of Bengal and the tragic memories connected with it still rankled in the bosoms of the people. But the coming of the King-Emperor was the occasion of a magnificent demonstration of India's loyalty. The way in which the Princes and peoples of India gathered to do honour to their liege-lord and Sovereign hushed for a while the cry of sedition and disarmed the malicious accusers. The announcement of the annulment of the Partition of Bengal by the King-Emperor at the Delhi Darbar pacified the Province which had lived seven years of sorrow and tribulation. The Despatch of August, 1911, with which Lord Hardinge's illustrious name will ever be associated, foreshadowed the destiny of the country and laid down the principle of Provincial Autonomy. A certain section of the people was indeed so pleased with the ideal state of being that the Congress itself was supposed thereafter to be superfluous.

But the President, Pandit Bishan Narain Dhar, whose chronic illness had compelled his retirement, spoke of the illiberal spirit of the Bureaucracy. "While a New India has gradually been rising up, that spirit too has been growing, and

so the critical situation has arisen." He gave a long list of the causes in which popular interests were opposed by the Bureaucracy. He condemned the policy of coercion and spoke of Anglo-Indian opposition to the attempts at Hindu-Muslim unity. Speaking of a proposed Conference of Hindus and Muslims, an Anglo-Indian paper asked: "Why do these men want to unite the two communities, if it is not to unite them against the Government." He disapproved of communal representation, and after reviewing the details of the political situation, said that he sympathised with "visionaries" and added:

"I know that moderation sometimes means indifference, and caution, timidity, and I hold that India needs bold and enthusiastic characters—not men of pale hopes and middling expectations, but courageous natures, fanatics in the cause of their country."

Chief among the resolutions were thanks for the annulment of the Partition appropriately moved by Babu Surendranath, removal of the Seditious Meetings Act and Press Act from the Statute Book, and of the regulations for deportation without trial moved by Baikunta Nath Sen and support to Mr. Gokhale's Elementary Education Bill. The South African troubles were seriously considered and Mr. Polak was one of the speakers.

The Twenty-seventh Session of the Congress was held in 1912 at Bankipore. Mr. R.N. Mudholkar was the President and the sturdy Muslim leader, Muzr-ul-Haque, was the Chairman of the Reception Committee. The Congress met under the shadow of a calamity in the form of the death of Mr. Hume, and the dastardly outrage on the person of Lord Hardinge. Only 207 delegates attended this Session. It is significant that the number of delegates in the Convention Congresses has not been flattering. The First Congress after the Surat split had 626, the Second, 243 at Lahore, the Third, 636 at Allahabad, the Fourth, 446 at Calcutta, and the Fifth, at Bankipore only 207, while the next at Karachi had 550. Feeling references were made again and again to the outrage on the Viceroy, and India's sympathies and allegiance were assured him. Chief among the reforms demanded were the settlement of troubles in South Africa, a burning question since 1908, moved by Mr. G. K. Gokhale, and supported by Pandit Madan Mohan and Mazr-ul-Haque, the enforcement of the Despatch of Lord Hardinge, moved by Mr. Surendranath Bannerji, the improvements of Council regulations, and the reform of public services, in view of the Royal Commission then appointed. There was a resolution deprecating separate communal electorates for local bodies. The leading feature of the Congress was the feeling for Hindu-Muslim unity. On the second day a song was sung on it. The Welcome Address of Mr. Mazr-ul-Haque dealt with the problem, and

showed by a digression into the history of Behar how that problem had never been serious in his Province. It was in Bankipore, also, that Ibrahim Rahimtoola brought the Muslim League to accept the Congress ideal. The two grievous problems of these years have been the South-African troubles and the question of Hindu-Muslim *entente*. Mr. Gokhale devoted his very best energies to secure the proper solution of the thorny question of South Africa, and Lord Hardinge's sympathies were ever with India, "deep and burning". The Hindu-Muslim problem, which was ever serious and was rendered specially so by the bone of communal electorates thrown among them by the Bureaucracy, was ably dealt with by the various Congresses. Bankipore represented a distinct landmark, and the presidentship of Nawab Syed Muhammad at the next Congress at Karachi materially advanced the new relations of amity and comradeship.

The Twenty-eighth Congress met at Karachi in 1913. It was by no means a brilliant Session as many of the older leaders were absent. The one feature which makes it memorable is the advance in the story of Hindu-Muslim relations. It was presided over by a Musalman, the lineal descendant of Tippu Sultan. Nawab Syed Muhammad noted with pleasure and appreciation the acceptance of the Congress ideal of Self-Government by the Muslim League and the hope expressed by that body that leaders on both sides should meet

periodically "to find a *modus vivendi* for joint and concerted action in questions of public good". He appealed for the unity of all in India and added : "The tide of national unity by God's grace will surely sweep away in its majestic onward cause the unnatural and artificial barriers of race, colour and religion." By far the most important resolution was the one moved by the Hon. Mr. Bhupendranath Basu welcoming the resolution of the Muslim League. "The India of the future," he said, "will be a stronger, nobler, greater, higher, aye, and a brighter India than was realised by Ashoka in the plenitude of his power, a better India than was revealed to Akbar in the wildest of his visions." The Twenty-eighth Congress dissolved on the evening of the 28th December, 1913.

The next Congress was to meet at Madras in December, 1914. But in August of that year England had declared War on Germany.

II

The declaration of War opened out a new chapter in the history of the Congress. While one should recognise the orderliness and harmony of the Congress Sessions since Surat, he must also admit a heaviness and monotony in its movement and working. The "Moderate" School was on the whole pleased with the reforms of Lord Morley who became in their eyes the

Simon de Montfort of Indian Parliamentary institutions. The annulment of the Partition of Bengal pacified the people of that Province, and the wholesome cry that political rights can never be a free gift of a conquering Nation was hushed into silence with the close of their agitation. The "Nationalist" or the "Extremist" school had completely seceded, and even outside the Congress their voices were never heard. Mr. Tilak, their leader, was transported for six years, and other leaders were in exile voluntary or enforced. The Congress went on reaffirming its ancient faith in British justice and passing resolutions which had become stale by twenty years and more of jarring repetition. And such was the self-complacency of most Indians that all seemed to go on splendidly about them. But the grievances of Indians in South Africa were a rude shock to this school of political neuters. They showed the degradation attached to an Indian in the system of Imperial citizenship. The boasted Union Jack could afford no protection to people who had not only sought its protection but had by their loyalty more than once upheld and protected it. The Indian knew himself the helot he was. There was a most admirable agitation all over the country led by one of India's dearest and greatest leaders, Mr. Gopal Krishna Gokhale. The sympathies of Lord Hardinge were with the people and his speech at Madras was a classic utterance. Mr. Gokhale's resolution was accepted in the Imperial Council, and mainly

through his and Lord Hardinge's statesmanship, a partial solution was arrived at. This was the only question which roused the slumbering energies of a slothful nation during the years 1908 to 1914. But the confidence the people ever had in the Viceroy, "lonely and serene," whose trials and bereavements fascinated India's imagination, did much to keep down discontent and wrath. When the South African question was partly at least settled, the country hardly knew what to do. The Congress at Madras, as the six Congresses previous to it, was not promised any more pleasing occupation than the reaffirming of Resolutions, re-affirmed *ad nauseum*.

But the War widened the horizons of India and England and the "angle of vision" was changed. Old questions assumed a new meaning and purpose in the light of the international situation created by the War. India realised the might of the combination of powers splendidly organised, and the country learnt, as never before it had done, that the complexity of international relations would make isolated existence of Nations impossible. Leagues and alliances and federations bound by considerations of "enlightened self-interest" and inspired with a high moral enthusiasm were found essentially formidable combinations such as Germany's were to be encountered and defeated. The school of thought clamouring for complete independence was now splendid if only an attainable ideal was now

brought face to face with the dreadful actualities which rendered that prospect far too distant, if ever at all, to be practicable. Again it was a war of ideals. As Mr. Bhupendra Nath Basu said : " The days of the Lotus-eater are gone, the world is swinging on the uplifting ropes of time, and in Europe, the war of nations, now in progress, will knock off the last weights of mediæval domination of one man over many, of one race over another." The statesmen of England declared to the world that it was a war to vindicate the sacredness of treaties and Proclamations, a war against aggression and might, a war to defend minor nationalities and uphold the cause of justice, freedom and civilisation. Could India forget the " unbroken record of broken promises," the relegation to the background of the Queen's Proclamation, the unworthy interpretation of the Despatch of Lord Hardinge? It was a war of freedom, and the Colonies and India contributed their best to its success. Indian soldiers fought for the freedom of Belgium, shall these warriors return to the land of bondage? These were the thoughts roused by the War in a people sunk and sodden in care.

The splendid rally to the standard of the Mother Country of India and the Colonies was the admiration of the world. The Colonies were bound to England by many a tie, and above all by the tie of consanguinity. But India was an alien land administered by a distrusted Bureaucracy. The days of the Mutiny were not yet

forgotten and the bombs of Bengal were a secret reminder. Germany counted on India's disloyalty, the Bureaucrats of India always saw sedition in every creak and crevice. England itself doubted our loyalty. The manifestation of a nation's love at the Coronation of 1911 could not weigh against the darker memories. But Lord Hardinge knew to trust a people. His knowledge of the inner currents of European diplomacy, his intimate touch with all the Chancellories of Europe particularly fitted him for the Viceroyalty of India. The Expeditionary Force he sent to the front, his decision to put the warriors of India along with the best men of Europe, were among the most admirable acts of his statesmanship. The Indian people and princes offered money and men. Ambulances and hospital ships were subscribed for. Indian sepoy's fought in the fields of Flanders, on the deserts of Mesopotamia, and the shores of Gallipoli. Their blood mingled with the blood of Englishmen in one joyous comradeship of death. The impression on England was most marvellous. Even the *Times*, whose rancorous animosities towards India we have once noticed, changed its tone and signalled a new era. "On our part," it said, "when we have settled account with the enemy, India must be allowed a more ample place in the Councils of the Empire".

Readjustment was in the air. Imperial problems were to be reconsidered in the light of the new situation and in accordance with the new

revelations of Imperial unity. Colonial statesmen had begun to say that in future they should also be consulted in all Imperial concerns of peace and war. The emergence of India into the international situation brought her to the notice of the Empire. Till then she was unheard of and unknown, her fidelity impugned, her allegiance slandered. Not the Bureaucracy alone, but England, France, Belgium, later on America, and the Colonies had a moral charge of the future destinies of their comrades-in arms. It caught their imagination and won their gratitude. The more liberal among them could not with a clean conscience omit India from their schemes of Imperial readjustment. Sir Valentine Chirol & Co. kept up, no doubt, their usual campaigns of slander and vilification. But the better mind of England was with us. Mr. Roberts said in the House of Commons that this loyalty is "a reasoned sentiment based upon considerations of enlightened self-interest," and appealed to the British public to change their "angle of vision" in their perspective of the Indian problem. The *Review of Reviews* said: "India to day occupies a higher place in the Empire than ever before, and has materially advanced her claims to Self-Government, and it is inevitable that after the War her outstanding demands should receive the most sympathetic consideration . . . We have made promises of Self-Government to Egypt and it is inconceivable that we should deny the same privileges to India. At present, India is not pressing her claim, but

patiently awaits her just due, not as a reward, but as a right which her conduct has shown her worthy of possessing." Lord Haldane said at a reception given him by Indian students in England : "The Indian soldiers are fighting for the liberties of humanity, as much as we ourselves. India has freely given her life and treasure in humanity's great cause, hence things cannot be left as they are. We have been thrown together in the mighty struggle and have been made to realise our oneness, so producing relations between India and England which did not exist before. Our victory will be victory for the Empire as a whole and cannot fail to raise it to a higher level." Sir Francis Younghusband said with that candour of a soldier : "As regards the future of India it could be predicted that new conditions would arise, the old demand of Indians for commissions in the army would be pressed ; there would be demand for a more definite share in the Councils of the Empire, a large part in the management of their own affairs, right to bear arms and to volunteer and a more equal social position."

Such was English opinion when the Congress met at Madras. The impact of the new forces of thought on India was most profound. She saw her possibilities and had to organise herself and articulate her views, long ere the psychological moment passed by. The Madras Congress owed its importance to this Imperial situation. We have, as a result, the Self-Government resolution,

still indefinite, but it is the beginning of a new era—the twilight misty it may be and shadowy, but it held concealed in its bosom the promise of the dawn.

III

The Twenty-ninth Session of the Congress was in many ways a distinct advance on previous Congresses. The number of delegates was this time largest since Surat, but of the 866 delegates 748 were from the Province of Madras. The increase in the number of delegates was due to the impact of War conditions, and more directly still to a series of articles on the Congress published in the *New India*. It was a cause of common complaint that the Congress was only a "grievance manufacturing machine," and the secession of the *New India* took away from it much of its life and energy. The six Congresses since 1906 had been quite monotonous and the absence of leaders at Karachi and the general lowness of the numbers of delegates culminating in the 207 of Bankipore had pointed to many that interest in the Congress was on the wane. There were also certain minds obsessed altogether by the thought of the War, and by the strange idol of the Bureaucracy that no controversial questions should be allowed to embarrass the Government. They did not want that the Congress should meet and it was in pursuance of such thoughts that the Muslim League did not hold its Session this time.

But the Articles in the *New India*, written many of them by eminent men, focussed national feeling, and a vigorous propaganda was kept up in the Press of Bengal and Madras emphasising the need to continue the Sessions unbroken, and the importance of judging Indian questions in view of the imminent readjustment of the Empire.

The Congress met under the presidency of Mr. Bhupendra Nath Basu. It is important to notice his presidential declaration, that what was wanted was neither separation from, nor subordination to, Britain, but a "joint partnership" on equal terms. It used to be Colonial Self-Government under British paramountcy, a phrase which created a good deal of confusion. The idea of "joint partnership" was a distinct advance from the Imperial to the federal ideal and was due to the wider outlook opened out by the War. It is remarkable also that the Loyalty Resolution of the Madras Congress does not speak of "Loyalty to British rule, as of old, but of "allegiance to the British connection," a change most significant and far-reaching.

The chief resolution of the Session was the Self-Government Resolution, moved by Babu Surendranath and supported by Mrs. Besant. It was a most distinct advance inasmuch as Self-Government was clearly demanded in it. But it was inspired by the fact of India's proven loyalty, and was yet indefinite and vague. Provincial autonomy as promised in the Despatch of August, 1911, was very definitely demanded, and the

removal of invidious distinctions between the Indian and other subjects of H.M. But the word Self-Government was not used, nor was there any talk of Councils in the Resolution. But it was all the same a wide and comprehensive demand, Self-Government in effect, though it was not stated in what exact forms and within what exact limits that Government would have to be. Babu Surendranath said that the Congress took its stand on the Queen's Proclamation, and called on the Government to give effect to the Despatch of 25th August, 1911. "India would consist of a number of administrations, autonomous in all provincial affairs, with the Government of India above them, and possessing powers in case of mis-government." The Speaker quoted a letter from a leading Englishman in which he asked "India to organise her strength for this movement and educate her public both in India and all parts of the world". Babu Surendranath urged upon the Congress "to formulate your scheme, press it upon the attention of the British public, and I am confident that your appeal will not fall on heedless ears". Mrs. Besant supported and called upon the younger men to practise the art of Government in the local bodies. She vindicated India's worthiness for freedom and asked the Congress to formulate a definite scheme of Self-Government to be presented to England after the War. The resolution was a distinct and momentous advance. And in this lay the importance of the Madras Congress of 1914. It was the prologue of the new era and the epilogue of the old.

CHAPTER VI

The Home Rule Congress

I

The absence of Messrs. Mehta, Gokhale and Pandit Madan Mohan from the Madras Session left a sad gap in the ranks of leaders usually adorning the *dais* of the Congress. Mr. Gokhale was then laid up with the heart-illness to which he succumbed two months later. But the absence of these at what was certainly an important Session of the Congress was amply compensated for by the presence of Mrs. Besant. Not many realised then all the promise of her participation in the deliberations of the Congress. Within a few months she was destined to capture the imagination of India, by holding aloft the banner of Home Rule and sounding its battle-cry. There were some who were far from pleased with her entry into the political world. Uncharitable was the construction which others placed upon her action. But those present at the Session could well remember the enthusiastic greetings with which she was received. None in that Congress spoke manlier truths and declared better the majesty of the people that shall be. The President of the Session,

Babu Bhupendranath Basu, made a feeling reference amidst loud applause in welcoming Mrs. Besant to the Congress. He conveyed its thanks to the venerable lady who had joined the cause which she had made hers also, and had brought to it so much of her wisdom, energy and ardour. "As I listened to her," he said, "I was reminded of the palmy days of ancient India, when Arundati and Maitreyi discoursed to large assemblies of men". She was henceforth to be so potent a factor in the fortunes of the Congress, and her personality is so closely bound up with the subsequent politics of the country that it is impossible to proceed further without a digression into the antecedents and character of that master-figure.

Mrs. Besant was not new to India. She had been here for about a quarter of a century devoting her superb gifts of heart and intellect in the cause of social, religious and educational upliftment. From the very moment of her arrival she had attracted the admiration and won the faith of many Indians. Her work until 1913 was almost exclusively with the Theosophical Society. The Central Hindu College, which has since become the nucleus of the Hindu University, is a lasting monument to her labours in the cause of education. Though she avoided politics in India, she had a complete political training in her earlier days when she worked as a comrade of Mr. Charles Bradlaugh. She could

not continue her politics in India for many reasons. For some time, in the beginning, the leadership of the T. S. was in the hands of Helena Petrovna Blavatsky and Henry Steele Olcott, the one a Russian and the other an American, nationalities both then not quite friendly to England. And it was possibly feared that active political work, such as Mrs. Besant's would have been, might involve the Society in serious complications. Her opposition to Bengal in the days of the Partition agitation is well-known. Babu Bepin Chandra Pal ascribes it in his new book on Mrs. Besant to some convincing circumstances. She was a strong believer in the conservation of elements truly national. The Europeanisation so common in Calcutta offended her. She was a strong Imperialist and did not like the talk of disconnection from England. Her comradeship with Charles Bradlaugh had taught her the supreme value and sacredness of constitutional agitation. Bengal's agitation was stained with occasional crime. More than all, Bepin Pal says that not being in the movement, she could not catch its inwardness. Furthermore, she was a friend of Lord Minto, even more of Lady Minto, who was then the real power. But the years 1908-1913, which witnessed the failure of repressive measures to affect the "unrest" and the limited range of Lord Morley's reforms in affecting the situation, must have pointed to her something of the realities of our politics. During these years she lectured to many gatherings in England on

Indian questions and we may take it that the speech on "India's Plea for Justice," delivered under the Chairmanship of Earl Brassey, was the definite beginning of her Indian political life.

She returned to India from the last of these visits in the autumn of 1913 and started in January the *Commonweal*. One of the objects of this paper was "to draw India and Great Britain closer together by making known in Great Britain something of Indian movements *and the men who will influence from here the destinies of England*". In July of the same year she purchased the *Standard* which became the *New India* on the 1st of August. In December she spoke on the Congress of Madras on the question of "Reciprocity" in South African relations and on Self-Government.

Her studies in Indian politics, strengthened by her personal association with the work, and the forces let loose by the War, had shown her the necessity for Self-Government and our fitness for it. Speaking on the South African question, she used words such as we had not heard for long. "India does not chaffer with the blood of her sons and the proud tears of her daughters in exchange for so much liberty, so much right. India claims the right, as a Nation, to justice among the peoples of the Empire. India asked for this before the War, India asks for it during the War. India will ask for it after the War, *but not as a reward but as a right does she ask for it*. On that

there must be no mistake." The first of those brave words she has since spoken on the subject of Home Rule. She further added: "India is growing in the sense of her own dignity. She is not content to be any longer a child in the nursery of the Empire. She is showing the responsibility of the man in Europe. Give her the freedom of the man in India."

This fervid utterance can show how much in advance she was of general thought in India. There was in her speech and writing the firmness and courage which said: India welcomes English co-operation but is tired of English domination. Self-Government she earnestly desires to have with English help, but she is resolved to have it. India is enthralled, and she is determined to be free. Her marvellous powers of intellect, her magnificent eloquence, and her inexhaustible energies were all thrown into the great task of winning for India that freedom which alone would make her happy and great. Her experience of Indian life for twenty-five years, her study of Indian religion and philosophy and her acceptance of Hinduism combined to give her an insight into Indian problems such as few others of her race could have. She brought to her task a wonderful power of concentration and a matchless capacity for work. The immense resources in men and money, the large and devoted following she has ever commanded, added still more to her strength. She owned two journals of wide circulation

and enormous influence through which she hammered India's rights on the millions of this country. She was above all a fighter. Freedom was the breath of her being, and the freedom which she valued for herself, she valued for others also. She possessed the power to organise, to inspire and to lead. She once wrote: "Indians hesitate, where they should act; they ask where they should take; they submit where they should resist; they lack self-confidence and the audacity that commands success. Prompt, resolute, effective action is but too rare; they lack fire and decision." No truer words were written, and none could write them with greater authority than Mrs. Besant. Action, audacity that commands success, decision, fire, these are the leading virtues of Mrs. Besant as a fighter. We must add to these a lofty idealism and the gift of intuition. What more is needed for power and forcefulness of personality, when to these is added an eloquence that stirs the soul? It was inevitable that her entry into politics should be a new force. She gave our agitation a power and momentum such as we had not known for years. The Congress which had indubitably become monotonous and showed signs of exhaustion revived as under a magic touch. It is only the barest truth to say that the foremost cause of the signal success of the Thirtieth Congress was the persistent agitation she kept up week in and week out. It was felt on all quarters that her entry was pregnant with good. To the bureaucrats of the land, she must have

Like a comet burned
That fires the length of Ophiuchus huge
In the arctic sky, and from his horrid hair
Shakes pestilence and war.

To India she was an apostle and prophet, and Home Rule, the high evangel she was sent to declare. •

Mr. Surendranath Bannerji, speaking at the Twenty-ninth Congress at Madras on the Self-Government Resolution, quoted the letter of an Englishman in which he asked India "to organise her strength for this movement, and educate her public both in India and all parts of the world". The speaker, we have noticed, urged his audience to "formulate your scheme, press it upon the attention of the British public, and I am confident that your appeal will not fall on heedless ears". It may be remembered also that Mrs. Besant vindicated India's worthiness for freedom and asked the Congress to formulate a definite scheme of Self-Government to present to England after the War. This was the work that Mrs. Besant herself took up after the Congress of Madras was over. She used all her time, energy and resources for this great and indispensable task. Day after day she appealed to the country to secure India's place in the readjustment that was to follow the termination of the War. She exercised all her influence on the Congress Committees of the land to deliberate, discuss and formulate the scheme of Self-Government. Of the many schemes which were prepared by the Congress Committees for

discussion by the All-India Congress Committee, the one sent by Madras was the best planned and the most perfect. The Madras Congress Committee discussed the subject most thoroughly and none had a greater share in the moulding of the scheme than Mrs. Besant.

But the most far-reaching part of the work was Mrs. Besant's personal activities. In addition to the daily work of journalism, she addressed meetings in Madras, travelled to all the centres of political activity in the country, lectured to monster gatherings, interviewed all the leading men on the subject of Home Rule. She used this word first in September, 1915, in the *New India*. But it must be mentioned that the first use of it in Indian politics was by Mr. Baptista a little earlier. The declaration of India's fitness for Home Rule was followed by the proposal to start a Home Rule League dedicated to winning the freedom of the Motherland. This was the theme of her lectures, the subject of her articles, and the purpose of her interviews. It was phenomenal work for a woman of three score years and ten. But it was gone through with an enthusiasm, promptitude and vigour which astonished the whole of India. The result was simply marvellous. The whole country rang with the demand for Home Rule.

The position she took up in this most admirable campaign may be stated in a few words.

The War has changed the angle of vision. When the future of the Empire is considered, as it will be, after the War, India's silence might mean India's contentment, and she might be left out of account altogether. If the Colonies demand readjustment on the score of the sufferings they have undergone and the sacrifices they have made in the War, India has a right also to demand it in relation to her own place in the readjusted scheme. It will be ridiculous if Indian soldiers who fought for the freedom of Belgium come back to India to find their freedom still unattained. Mr. Bonar Law said : "Strike when the iron is hot." Why not India do so? But we do not demand Self-Government as the reward of our assistance in the War. It is a right we have asked before the War, and shall ask after the War is over. It does not lie in anybody's mouth to say we are unfit for Self-Government. The history of the past is a record of glory. It shows Indians did manage till lately their own affairs and could do so hereafter. The present system of Government is highly baneful. The drain has "bled" India's wealth and left her children starving on one meal a day. The administration is the costliest on earth. The Legislative Councils are farces. We have demanded ever so long for reforms from the Congress platform and have not got them. The children of the soil go forth with the brand of inferiority on their brows. Subjection has stunted their growth and dwarfed their stature. Foreign rule has demoralised them.

The Bureaucracy is based on distrust. It must go. India's claim is for freedom. It was never conceded by any country as a boon. It is a right to be fought and won. Agitation must be constitutional, but it must be manly, resolute, unceasing and based on impregnable facts. Let India shake off the hallucination that her freedom would be given as a bounty by any Nation. It is her right to be wrung from unwilling hands.

These were the thoughts with which she went about from city to city. They came clothed with a burning eloquence, and the country stood determined. One circumstance of happy augury was the revival of strong political life in Maharashtra. Mr. Tilak had returned to his country after a long and lonely exile. His followers gathered round him again and the "Nationalist" school of politics began to revive. The arguments of Mrs. Besant for Home Rule had many of them been used by the Nationalists of Bengal in the early days of the Partition agitation. They were not new or unfamiliar to the school of Nationalists in India. But in the early days there was no clear conception of the ideal. It was lost in the vagueness of phrases and the ambiguity of meanings. There was only the desire for freedom, the refusal to endure bondage, but what form that freedom should take, what limits were to define the Imperial connection were yet unsettled. Constructive programme of a definite kind there was none. But the year 1915 offered a constructive

programme and presented a clear ideal. Mr. Tilak himself accepted the new ideal of Home Rule and the form of Imperial relation it implied. This meant a compromise between the two Wings on the platform of Self-Government. The combination was sure to be irresistible. But the compromise on the Congress platform was not yet achieved. Mrs. Besant tried it along with others before the meeting of the Madras Congress, but it fell through. All that was done was the appointment of a Committee to consider the compromise. There was no chance of the sundered streams of our political life uniting in time for the Congress at Bombay. But they had commingled and flown together in the demand for Home Rule. This reconciliation of the separated streams was yet hidden in the recesses of the jungle. A few months more and they were to flow out re-united in the clear light of open day.

That way lay the hope of strength and the promise of victory. But the February of 1915 saw the demise of Gopal Krishna Gokhale. Thirty years of strenuous life and of absolute consecration to the service of the Country had made him the idol of the nation. At a time when his sober wisdom and profound knowledge of political questions was most needed he was carried away by the hand of Death. All India mourned his loss and for a time felt desolate. Within a few months followed him to the grave-

another of India's most stalwart workers, a giant among men, Sir Pheroza Shah M. Mehta. The Bombay Congress was to meet in December, 1915, under the leadership of Sir Satyendra Prasanna Sinha. The question of the Congress Compromise was to be finally settled in the Christmas of that year. Also the Conference was to consider the propriety of starting the Home Rule League. Above all, the new forces of political thought were to express themselves emphatically at the Congress and a declaration was to be made on the great question of National Freedom. The presence of two such stalwarts would have been truly valuable, but the Will of a Providence to which we can only bow had removed them from our midst. The country, however, was not discouraged. The demise of two such leaders was a silent call to gather in thousands to inherit their legacy. There was the supreme call of freedom to which the Congress had to say Yes or No. There was the problem of reunion, without which that freedom could not be won. All these made the Thirtieth Congress of Bombay momentous in the annals of our political life. The country looked on it with hope and expectation and 2259 delegates proceeded from all parts of India to attend the memorable Session, and of visitors there were full 15,000.

II

Sir S. P. Sinha was called upon by the Suffrages of the country to act as the spokesman

of India in that critical hour. He had not associated himself actively with the politics of the country, except, perhaps, for a resolution he moved in a Calcutta Congress on a subject, important no doubt, but not directly connected with the politics of the country. He was a man of high social standing both among Indians and Europeans and his eminence as a lawyer was well known all over the country. He was Law Member of the first Executive Council after the introduction of Lord Morley's reforms and held the portfolio once in charge of Macaulay and Maine. He had been in the inner Councils of the Government and it was possibly this which determined Mehta's mind in the choice of a President. Babu Surendranath said that he was the fittest man to preside when a readjustment was in the air and hoped that the first Indian Advocate-General of the High Court of Bengal, the first Indian member of the Viceroy's Executive Council, and the indisputable leader of the Calcutta bar, would crown his distinguished career by devoted services to the Motherland. Nothing was known of his political opinions and there was naturally great expectation as to the views he would express at that memorable session of the Congress. His ideal for India was nothing less than what Abraham Lincoln had so pithily expressed as "Government of the people for the people and *by the people*". "I yield to none in my desire for Self-Government." An Englishman had said that even if an angel were to come down from heaven

He would not surrender that most sacred of all his rights, the right of making his own laws. He recognised that good Government cannot be a substitute for Self-Government. But he was of the opinion of Lord Hardinge who said in his speech to the United Service Club of Simla : "The day for the complete fulfilment of this ideal is not yet." Is there any among us who are disposed to demur to the qualification that the goal is not yet ? "If so, I do not hesitate to express my entire disagreement, because I would sooner take the risk of displeasing than injuring my fellow countrymen. He quoted "Day will not break the sooner because we get up before the twilight". "I yield to none in my desire for Self-Government, but I recognise that there is a wide gulf between desire and attainment." Then came the quotation of the analogy from the Book of Edwin Bevan. India was a sick man in splints and bandages. The aid of the surgeon was indispensable. It was foolish to grudge the necessary fee.

The speech was splendidly delivered and the forensic skill of the great Jurist was well in evidence. The emphasis on the repeal of the Arms Act, the right to volunteer, the need for military training was strongly laid and the second part of the speech well expressed the feeling of the country. But the reservations placed on Self-Government, its relegation to the distant future, disappointed the larger part of the assembly. The delegates did not like that the question of Self-Government

should go out into the world with *this* kind of presidential authority and sanction. Their disappointment was the greater as on that very morning Mrs. Besant had decided to suspend the proposals to start the Home Rule League. A most influential and representative Committee considered the Scheme carefully and long, and it was at last decided that the Congress itself should take up the question and popularise it by work "educative and propagandist". It was felt that the Congress, which had laboured hard for 30 years through storm and sunshine, which had stood many an onset and was now within sight of the promised land, should go on with the work, and not a new born association, however stronger and better mobilised and however loyal, even subordinate, to the Congress. It was an idea truly noble and it commended itself to all. But it was well known that whatever the excellence of the annual Sessions, the Congress had not maintained a healthy and vigorous political activity throughout the year. Nor had it concentrated its efforts on this one question of Home Rule instead of dissipating them over various resolutions moved again and again, *ad nauseum* and to no effect. What was more, would it openly accept Self-Government as an immediate problem? And, accepting that, would it use its resources and organisation all for that great end? The leaders gave an undertaking to see that the Congress would do all that the Home Rule League proposed to do. And with that spirit of compromise, which is one of her

strongest features, Mrs. Besant suspended the proposals, though her followers wanted her to go on with them. All this was on the morning of the 27th on which day Sir S. P. Sinha delivered his inaugural address. It was frankly disappointing to the large majority of the delegates. He only asked for a definite proclamation defining the goal of England's policy to give Self-Government for India. "I appeal to the British Nation to declare their ungrudging approval of the goal to which we aspire, to declare their inflexible resolution to equip India for her journey to that goal and to furnish her escort on the long and weary road." The demand for a declaration was a statesmanlike move, but to stop with it was not statesmanship. Sir Satyendra recognised it and asked for some reforms, but they even, in their totality, did not amount to even a substantial measure of Self-Government. Disappointment was natural. But the Congress became, as Dada bhai said later, the Home Rule League, through the famous Resolution on Self-Government.

The Madras Congress had passed a resolution on the subject which ran : "That, in view of the profound loyalty which the people of India have manifested in this crisis, this Congress appeals to the Government to deepen and perpetuate it and make it an enduring and valuable asset of the Empire, by removing all invidious distinctions here and abroad, between His Majesty's Indian and other subjects, by redeeming the pledges of

provincial autonomy contained in the Despatch of the 25th August, 1911, and by taking such measures as may be necessary for the recognition of India as a component part of a federated Empire, in the full and the free enjoyment of the rights belonging to that status." The emphasis and appeal here are on India's loyalty. Provincial autonomy is all that is definitely stated as the step to the attainment of Self-Government. The Bombay resolution was more frank, more definite and went much farther. What was more, the word Self-Government was used in the resolution, not, however, in the vague and contented way in which it was used at Calcutta in 1906. The Bombay resolution was most carefully planned, word after word was considered and long discussed, and the Home Rule movement already set on foot by Mrs. Besant had not a little share in the moulding of it. It ran :

"That this Congress is of opinion that the time has arrived to introduce further any substantial measures of reform towards the attainment of Self-Government as defined in Article I of its Constitution, namely, reforming and liberalising the system of Government in this country so as to secure to the people an effective control over it, amongst others, by—

(a) The introduction of Provincial Autonomy including financial independence ;

(b) Expansion and reform of the Legislative Councils so as to make them truly and adequately

representative of all sections of the people and to give them an effective control over the acts of the Executive Government ;

(c) The reconstruction of the various existing Executive Councils and the establishment of similar Executive Councils in Provinces where they do not exist ;

(d) The reform or the abolition of the Council of the Secretary of State for India ;

(e) Establishment of Legislative Councils in Provinces where they do not now exist ;

(f) The readjustment of the relations between the Secretary of State for India and the Government of India ; and

(g) A liberal measure of Local Self-Government.

That this Congress authorises the All-India Congress Committee to frame a scheme of reform and a programme of continuous work, educative and propagandist, having regard to the principles embodied in this Resolution and further authorises the said Committee to confer with the Committee that may be appointed by the All-India Muslim League for the same purpose and to take such further measures as may be necessary ; the said Committee to submit its report on or before the

1st of September, 1916, to the General Secretaries who shall circulate it to the different Provincial Congress Committees as early as possible.

Besides the use of the word Self-Government it should be noticed that there are some definite reforms proposed which alone would bring about the consummation. The clause (a) was conditioned by the historic Despatch of August, 1911, which stated the need of, and gave the sanction to, Provincial Autonomy. Clause (b) showed that within half a dozen years the country had outgrown the reforms of Lord Morley. These were the very reforms which were once hailed as the hopeful beginnings of the future Parliament of India. (c) had been a demand for some time, and the debate in the House of Lords on the United Provinces Executive Council was fresh in the memory of the Congress. (d) has been asked in the First Congress many many years ago. (e) was also an old question. (f) and (g) were not new either. But the presenting of these in one combination and under the heading of Self-Government was certainly a momentous one. The decision, again, to frame a scheme of reform and "a programme of continuous work, educative and propagandist," was another step, even a stride in the direction of progress. The Conference with the Muslim League Committee was the most hopeful of all. The 1st of September was the date fixed. Mrs. Besant was to wait until that day, and if nothing was done, she was to start the Home Rule League.

Most appropriately Babu Surendranath now grown gray and aged, his resounding voice fading away sometimes into whispers, Surendranath, the hero of a thousand platforms, the veteran fighter and ' ancient standard-bearer of the Congress, Surendranath, who moved so often the resolution on the expansion of Legislative Councils, was asked to voice again the great declaration of the Congress. Once more the Congress heard the rolls of thunder :

“ Brother delegates, the idea of readjustment is in the air, not only here in India but all the world over. The heart of the Empire is set upon it. It is the problem of problems upon which humanity is engaged. They are talking about what will happen after the War in Canada and in Australia. They are talking about it from the floor of the House of Commons and in the gatherings of public men and Ministers of State. May we not also talk about it a little from our own standpoint?” This in answer to the view that the Government should not be embarrassed by the discussion of controversial questions. Then as to our fitness. It is the normal order of things. “ Self-Government is the ordering of Nature, the dispensation of Divine Providence; every community must be the master of its own destiny. That is a part of the divine law, a part of the immutable order of the universe written in every line of universal history, written in characters of light by the inscrutable hand of Divine Providence.” Our

past history justifies it. "In the morning of the world, before Rome had been built, before Babylon and Nineveh had emerged into the historic arena, our ancestors had founded these village organisations, which represent the first beginnings of Self-Government. So well organised, so tenacious of life and vitality they were, that they have survived the crash of Empires, the subversions of thrones, changes of dynasties, and they lived within living memory." Coming to more recent time we have been declared successful in Local Self-Government and in the Councils since 1909. Not only that the stupendous gathering before him, its deliberations, its compromises and consultations were "proof positive of our capacity for Self-Government". Again, as Mr. Gladstone said, "Liberty alone fits people for free institutions," "free institutions alone qualify a people for Self-Government". They are the most useful academies and seminaries for the requisite training.

Coming to the scheme of reforms, Provincial Autonomy is the government of the Province, not by the bureaucracy but by the chosen representatives of the people. Its basis is financial independence. The non-official majority of the Councils was a captivating phrase, but an undiluted myth. The powers of the Council ought to be enlarged. "A resolution, after all, is a pious hope and aspiration." The Government of India should be responsible to the public opinion of India. Fiscal domination should be put an end to.

The resolution speaks of a Conference with the Committee of the Muslim League. "I rejoice that they are going to hold a Session. (Applause.) Our fraternal greetings go out to the Muslim League. (Cheers.) We sympathise with them in their patriotic efforts (applause) and may the divine Dispenser of blessings preside over their deliberations. (Applause.) We are brothers standing shoulder to shoulder practically upon the same platform (applause) for the advancement of the common interests of the same Mother. (Applause.) I am sure a scheme of reform, a combined demand put forward by the League and the Congress, backed by the voice of united India, and supported with unflinching tenacity, is bound to be irresistible. Brethren, let us stand together, Hindus and Muhammadans, under the same banner of Self-Government. Let it float aloft, and let us carry it to a triumphant issue. (Applause.) He concluded : "This campaign is a moral as well as a political campaign ; and we have on our side the sympathies of civilised countries, the good wishes of the true and the thinking in all parts of the world, the majestic forces of time, and, above all, the blessing of Almighty Providence. Thus equipped, we are irresistible, invincible. Armed with that faith, we have started this campaign, and God willing, in the fulness of time, we shall have established in this great and ancient land the inestimable blessings of Self-Government under the British ægis. (Loud and long continued applause.)

The extracts given above suffice to show how fast the Congress had moved in a year, how great the progress of the nation and also the evolution of the idea of Self-Government as an immediate practicability. The "God-gifted organ voice" of India breathed a warmth into the atmosphere chilled by the restraints and reservations of Sir S. P. Sinha. Those whose privilege it was to be present that day could well remember the repeated storms of applause punctuating the onflowing torrents of Surendranath's oratory. The emancipation of a great people was the theme of his eloquence. As the gray-bearded orator poured out his periods, volley on volley and peal on peal, as the voice of thunder resounded in the wide and expansive pavilion, it seemed as though one heard the "large utterance of the early Gods," as though Jupiter Himself had come down from heaven to proclaim the liberation of a people.

He was followed most fittingly by Mrs. Annie Besant who had come by now to the very mid-currents of our political life and occupied a position of leadership and influence. As the present writer pens the lines, all the moving scenes of that day and hour pass in his memory. So must they before the minds of the thousands of people who thronged into the shamiana to catch the first accents of a people yearning for political freedom: the resounding oration, the mellifluous modulations, the far-reaching accents of one

History declared the fitness of India for Self-Government 5000 years ago. India traded with ancient Babylon, and from there to 1613 she had an era of unbroken commercial and industrial prosperity. There were wars? But so there were in England. Since the opening of the English Factory at Surat one King was beheaded, a second King was driven out of the country, and two Civil Wars were waged on behalf of the Stuart House. In India, even in times of war, the village communities were undisturbed. Ploughmen tilled their soil within sight of the battling army.

Are you fit for Self-Government? "5000 years of success are greater than the theories of a few Englishmen." Edwin Bewan was quoted. India was a poor cripple with limbs broken and tissues lacerated. No. "India is no sick man. She is a giant who was asleep and is now awake." Mr. Gokhale said that subjection demoralised the character of a great people. Self-Government alone would keep it up. "These men who are here representatives of India from every part of the land, these men are not the children of savages emerging from barbarism, needing to be trained in the elements of Self-Government by a western nation. They are the children of heroes, the children of warriors worthy to govern their own land. Oh, if only you would trust yourselves, if only you would believe in your own power, in your own strength and in your own

knowledge! If Sir Satyendra can tell us that he stood face to face with the Viceroy, has been an equal man in the Viceroy's Council, can we say that an Indian is not worthy to rule in his own land? Are we to think that he is the one swallow that does not make the summer? Are we not to believe, as I believe, Sir, that there are hundreds like you, who would have shown your own ability if they had a chance to do so?

“And I pray of you by the memory of your past, by the possibility of the greatness of your present, and by the splendid future that lies before you, if as Sir Pherozeshah Mehta once said upon this platform, you are not emasculated as a Nation, stand up on your feet like men.”

Pandit Madan Mohan, grown gray by years of service, but youthful still and buoyant, spoke in that seasoned oratory of his to the resolution. Thirty years of service, 10 years of work in the Provincial, and 6 years of it in the Imperial, Legislative Councils had shown him that no progress could be achieved without Self-Government. There was no question of fitness, as even to-day one-third of India is ruled by Indians in the Native States. “We now want that we should be associated, liberally associated, in governing our own affairs.” With the boons of British rule has come the consciousness of a feeling of degradation in finding that in our own land, with our own ancient Traditions, surrounded by almost oceans of intelligence

and good sense, we are held to be incompetent to govern ourselves. (Cries of shame.) This is really a matter of shame. It does not lie in the mouth of anybody to tell Indians that they are unfit for Self-Government." "I hope and trust that every Indian, who has any sense of self-respect and who recognises his duty to the Motherland, will stand boldly forward, advocate the cause of Self-Government, will stand forward to carry on all the agitation that is necessary to achieve that end." He concluded : "The Shastras say, the Vedas say, a man becomes what he desires to become. I pray you, therefore, Brothers and Sisters, to earnestly and carefully desire to be free men and free women. (Applause.) Cease to think that you are serfs, that you are slaves ; cease to think that you have not got the capacity to govern yourselves ; cease to think that the differences which may exist, which do exist amongst us, constitute an obstacle which cannot be overcome. Believe that you are as good as any mortal man in any clime or land. (Applause.) Believe that all that you need is the opportunity given to us to show what you can achieve, and, God willing, success will come to you earlier than you think. (Loud applause.)"

Before we leave the subject it is only fitting that Mrs. Sarojini Naidu's speech in support of the historic resolution should be referred to. She spoke on behalf of the "many millions of my sisters in India, not only Hindu, but my

Musalman, Parsi and other sisters" in support of Self-Government "which is the desire and destiny of every human soul". "I see with the eye which is given to the world's poets who dream, and dream with a palpitating heart that vision, that expectation, that ecstasy of desire, that prayer that we shall spend forth every moment of our lives, that the dream may be realised." She said again "for the first time, after centuries upon centuries of political antagonism, of bitterness that comes from division between creed and creed, between race and race, after centuries of feuds and bloodshed, this is the psychological moment when the Hindu and Musalman are met together in this cosmopolitan city to co-operate together, to weld together into a Nationality with unity of feeling and purpose, of endeavour and achievement, without which there can be no India of to-morrow." She concluded with a most thrilling recitation of her anthem to the Mother :

Waken, O Mother ! Thy children implore Thee,
 Who kneel in Thy presence to serve and adore Thee !
 The night is afresh with a dream of the morrow,
 Why still dost Thou sleep in Thy bondage of sorrow
 Awaken and sever the woes that enthrall us
 And hallow our hands for the triumphs that call us.

Are we not Thine, O Belov'd, to inherit,
 The manifold pride and power of Thy spirit ?
 Ne'er shall we fail Thee, forsake Thee or falter
 Whose hearts are Thy home and Thy shield and Thine

Lo ! we would thrill the high stars with Thy story,
 And set Thee again in the forefront of glory.

Mother ! the flowers of our worship have crowned Thee !
Mother ! the flame of our hope shall surround Thee !
Mother ! the sword of our love shall defend Thee !
Mother ! the song of our faith shall attend Thee !
Shall not our dauntless devotion avail Thee ?
Hearken ! O Queen and O Goddess, we hail Thee !

The Speeches in support of the Resolution demanding Self-Government were magnificent ones, full of facts, artistic in their expression, and instinct with an eloquence which owed its power to the greatness of the subject as much as to the personality of the speakers. They show the wave of public feeling which swept the Congress along its majestic flow. In vain did the more Conservative among them, Sir S. P. Sinha for one try to check its resistless course. The Time-spirit was invincible. The Gods of Olympus strove in vain against it. The December of 1916 will be ever memorable in the annals of our history. The great National assembly made a most definite declaration for Self-Government, Home Rule or Swaraj. But it was yet the cry of a section. The truly united voice of India had not yet sent forth the proclamation. But it was not long in coming. Only a year was to pass by for people of all creeds and parties to stand together on a common political platform, to formulate a common scheme for the future and to send forth a common declaration. But to Lucknow we shall presently return.

The Bombay Congress was important also for the unity it marked between Hindus and Muslims,

Moderates and Extremists. The Congress Compromise was discussed and thanks to the thoughtful patriotism and spirit of compromise of both the parties, the thorny and difficult problem came to a mutually satisfactory solution. The Creed of the Congress remained intact and acceptance of it was essential for participation in the Congress. But to the XX Article was added another clause. It is possible in virtue of that for any Association of not less than two years' standing on the 31st December, 1915, and which has for its object the attainment of Self-Government on colonial lines within the British Empire by constitutional means to elect delegates to the Congress. The Extremists were fairly satisfied and the union was cemented. It was expected in 1914 that Madras would have an united Congress, but the honour was to pass away to Bombay. Even that hope proved illusory as it was too late for the Extremists to enter, but they came in at Lucknow in 1916 where India stood once more united.

The Hindu-Muslim problem which had reached a decisive stage at Bankipore and Karachi seemed altogether set back at Bombay. There was at the beginning absolutely no indication of any disaster. The leaders on both sides were never before on terms of closer amity and comradeship. When Mr. Mazr-ul-Haque arrived on the morning of the 26th the leaders of the Congress were present to receive him at the Station, the Volunteers of the Congress filed along the roads shoulder to

shoulder with those of the Muslim League and the houses and shops and emporiums on the way—Guzerati, Marwari, Maharatta, Parsi, Muhammadan and Christian—vied with one another in their demonstrations, filled his car with garlands and bouquets, and accorded him a most cordial reception. All the amenities of social life which a first-rate and wealthy metropolis could offer were arranged for free exchange of thought, greetings and friendship. The Muslim leaders as they entered the Congress were given lusty ovations, they had likewise assembled at Boribunder to receive Sir S. P. Sinha, their Volunteers had also joined those of the Congress in escorting him in procession, all was chivalry, understanding and concord. When the Muslim League began its sittings after the Congress dispersed, the Congress leaders were received in the handsome pavilion on the western beach with signal ovations. The address of Mr. Mazr-ul-Haque, so full of the new spirit which had permeated the great Islamic community, was punctuated with applause. The crescent of young Islam never shone brighter. But on the second day, as Mr. M.A. Jinnah came forward to move his resolution, disturbance arose in a distant corner. It was the beginning. More voices joined and confusion arose. The presidential authority was defied and it seemed that some at least might come to blows. But there was restraint on the nationalist side. It is useless to enter into the details of that unhappy episode. But this must be said, that the break-up was the protest

of the reactionary section which hated the approximation of the Muslim League to the Congress. Racial fanaticism was at the bottom. It seemed from the obscene words sometimes spoken in that welter of confusion, the appearance of Pathans armed with lathies, the open resort to hooliganism of a most disgraceful kind that the hard-won *entente cordiale* had shivered into fragments. But it was only in the interests of that union and confraternity. For the resort to unconstitutional and indecent methods disgraced once and for ever the reactionary party. The reactionaries only dashed their heads against the rock of the growing unity, only their heads were broken! Young Islam rose triumphant. Its purity was touched by irreverent hands. But it rose immaculate. The forces of darkness and evil returned to the cavernous dungeons of their habitation and were unheard of again. Unity remained unshaken. On the same night was given a magnificent evening party by Sir Adamjee Peerbhoy, a merchant prince of Bombay, at which about 5000 men were present. Hindus and Muhammadans went about in careless companionship and talked and smiled as though nothing had happened. Self-Government was proclaimed and unity cemented at Bombay. What more does a Nation need to win its battles? Here was a cause, a battle cry, and the strength which comes of union.

III

We have noticed that Mrs. Besant agreed to defer the starting of the Home Rule League to

September, 1916, even to drop it altogether if the Congress really took up the work. It was a great achievement for her and for the country to get the Congress to commit itself definitely to the Home Rule ideal. But the Congress had also resolved to carry on education and propaganda on behalf of its great resolution. The All-India Congress Committee had to prepare a scheme of reform, confer on the subject with the Committee of the Muslim League, and plan a campaign of educative work, all this before the 1st of September. In the summer which followed the Committee met and discussed, and during the year the Provincial Congress Committees tried a hand at propaganda. Madras, chiefly because of Mrs. Besant's influence, arranged for a number of meetings in which some National problems of importance were dealt with. But these were not followed up all over the country, and even at Madras the arrangements were not in proportion to the magnitude of the purpose. There was no Conference with the Committee of the Muslim League, nor the formulation of a complete scheme of Self-Government by the All-India Congress Committee, much less the inauguration of a vigorous and extensive campaign for Home Rule.

The 1st of September came and Mrs. Besant was true to her promise. She did all she could meanwhile to carry out the Congress Resolution. But the Congress was too heavy to move, and years of slumber had rendered it somewhat

immobile except to enjoy annual feasts of oratory. On the 1st of September, 1916, therefore, Mrs. Besant started the Home Rule League in Madras. It had a branch in Bombay where Messrs. Jamnadas and Telang were the leading members. At about the same time was started the Maharashtra Home Rule League. Messrs. B. G. Tilak and Joseph Baptista were its leaders, and it had a splendid band of members. Bengal was rather slow to move, its political life had subsided after the annulment of the Partition. But, within a few months, the Province of Bankim Chandra and Rabi Tagore established also a Provincial Branch. The *New India* in Madras kept the agitation alive. Mrs. Besant's immense resources were whole-heartedly dedicated to the sacred cause. On the 14th of September was held a magnificent meeting to commemorate the first anniversary of Home Rule. Every principal town came up in the Southern Province and not a day passed without a fresh accession to the number of Branches. It was not long before it came to be felt that for a town to be without a branch of the League was a disgrace. The propaganda went on vigorously through press and platform. Mr. G. S. Arundale was the Organising Secretary and none could have discharged the functions of that office better. Full of devotion to his great and venerated leader, full of ardent enthusiasm for the great cause of Indian freedom, he was one of the central pillars of the Home Rule League. His articles in the *New India* which bulletined the affairs of

the League were characterised at once by exquisite sense of humour and fervent enthusiasm and their effect was marvellous. His work among the young whom none knew better or loved more warmly planted the longing for freedom in the bosoms of the future workers of the land. The propaganda went on most vigorously and the Home Rule cause spread to larger and larger numbers.

Of the many causes which helped the spread of the Home Rule ideal, the scattering of the seeds of freedom, none was more effective or swifter in its operation than the goodwill and patronage of the Bureaucracy. In May, 1916, was imposed a security of Rs. 2000 on *New India* for preaching the doctrines of Home Rule. That was the first blow struck at the cause. But Mrs. Besant, like the cause with which she is indissolubly bound up, is so like the fabled Meleager, that every time she is floored, she rises again with redoubled might and glory. The agitation not only in South India but all over the country was simply marvellous. The security only served to enhance the circulation of the paper and the power of its influence. More forcible became the demand for Home Rule because of this further manifestation of an irresponsible Bureaucracy. In July again came the order of H. E. Lord Willingdon prohibiting Mrs. Besant's entry into the Bombay Presidency, an act of autocratic unwisdom and injustice. The country was thankful to Lord Willingdon for his truly British vindication of the

right of personal liberty. *Civus Romanus sum* could only fire the peroration of Lord Palmerston ! Then came on the heels of the agitation against the Bombay order the prohibition of entry into the Central Provinces. Sir Benjamin Robertson was the gallant knight who drew this rusty sword against one whom every Englishman should honour as England's greatest gift to India. A few months later we got Sir Benjamin's unmeaning explanation of the order. In August the security of Rs. 2000 was forfeited and *New India* paid Rs. 10,000 to an uncontrolled and maddened Executive as the price of its continuance. In Maharashtra Mr. Tilak was asked to pay Rs. 40,000 as security for " his good behaviour". The case was naturally lost when tried by an executive officer who, according to an iniquitous system is at once the Judge and accuser, but the High Court of Bombay discharged Mr. Tilak and vindicated the great traditions of British justice. Add to these the hundreds of internments in Bengal. Repression bestrode the land and popular feeling ran high against the Bureaucracy. India had outgrown the need for officialdom. Bureaucracy stinked in her mouth. She demanded in no uncertain voice the crown of which she was disinherited, the Crown of Responsible Self-Government.

Though late, the All-India Congress Committee continued its work. The Scheme was drawn up, the Conference was held with the Muslim League, long discussions took place, and the

famous Congress-League Scheme was passed. It embodied quite a substantial measure of Self-Government. The Governors and Governor-General are given the power of veto. Only four-fifths of the Legislative Councils are elected by the people. Only one-half of the Executive Councils is to be filled by Indians elected by the Legislative Councils. These are the chief concessions which the people of India have made in the interests of the Government. But they claim powers which concede to them a very substantial measure of Self-Government. The special feature of the scheme is the distribution of seats in the Councils so as to represent the interests of the Muhammadans. It is impossible to quote the Congress-League Scheme at this stage, but it may be found reproduced *extenso* in the Appendices. It is sufficient to mention that the deliberations were deep and long and provided conclusive proof of our capacity for Self-Government. Never before was witnessed in India the spirit which pervaded these deliberations, the caution and sobriety of judgment, the courage and dignity of the demands and the sense of compromise with which opposing interests were considered. It was only the expression of perfected unity and the consciousness of national manhood.

Another happening of far-reaching significance was the Memorandum of the Nineteen. A scheme of post-war reforms in the light of the

discussion all over the country and in view of its progress was submitted to the Government by nineteen Indian members of the Imperial Legislative Council. The scheme is given in the Appendices as also the excellent preamble. This was one more significant expression of India's determination to be the mistress of her own interests.

Immediately before the Lucknow Congress, however, a huge sensation was created by a private letter of Mr. Lionel Curtis published in the *Bombay Chronicle*. He belonged to the Round Table group of Imperial politicians and the letter disclosed a "deep-laid conspiracy" to subject India to the joint domination of England and her Colonies. India was to be still in bondage, and the Self-Governing Colonies should exercise authority over it simply because they were self-governing. The worst of it was that some highly placed Government officials were also concerned with it. And all this at a time when India had made up her mind to win her freedom.

IV

The most memorable session of the Indian National Congress commenced its sittings on the 26th December, 1916, at Lucknow. The events of the year which have been concisely noticed made the Congress truly national and united. For the first time after ten years the two Wings of the Nationalist Party stood shoulder to shoulder on

the same platform to voice forth India's determination to be great and free. The Hindus and Muslims completed their union and realised as never before that their ideals were "indivisible and identical". Speaking of the union in the Congress camp between Moderates and Extremists, Lokamanya Tilak said : " I am glad to say that I have lived these ten years to see that we are going to put our voices and shoulders together to push on this scheme of Self-Government. Not only have we lived to see these differences closed, but to see the differences of Hindus and Muhammadans closed as well. So we have now united in every way in the United Provinces and we have found that luck in Lucknow." Mr. Bepin Chandra Pal, another of the Extremist leaders, said : " These ten years have not gone in vain, and the fruition of our efforts is seen in every word of the resolution that has been placed before you to-day. We fought, we wrangled, but every fight is justified, not in itself but by the closer and the more organic reconciliation to which it leads, and our fight has in the Providence of God led to more organic reconciliation between all parties, all ideals and all principles that we represented and fought for during the past." The utterances of the Muslim leaders on the harmony and concord of Hindu-Muslim relations were equally firm and joyous. The Hon. Syed Nabiullah in his welcome address to the Muslim League at Lucknow said : " That end I need hardly say is united India, alive to her destiny and recoiling from no toil

and sacrifice to rise to the summit of her aspiration, *i. e.*, to the position of a self-governing member of the British Empire. Is there a single Musalman present here to-day, nay, is there a single Indian in and outside of this hall, born of Indian woman, whose heart fails to warm up and whose pulse does not beat faster as he gives even a moment's thought to that glorious conception? If there is such a miserable wretch in existence, he is a freak and a monstrosity. For such ideal no effort can be spared, no sacrifice can be too great." The Hon. Mr. Mazr-ul-Haque said: "All my political life I have been of this opinion that our Motherland cannot advance without the unity of Hindus and Muhammadans. And that has been achieved to-day in this town of Lucknow." Mrs. Sarojini Naidu, also an ambassador of the Hindu-Muslim problem, said:

"Less than four years ago in this very city of Lucknow, this city of memories, this city of dead Kings, a new hope came to birth, because the younger generation of Musalmans had seen a vision that made it possible for the leaders of the National Congress to realise within the scope of practical vision, of practical work, of practical achievement, the National soul. It was my privilege to represent my great community on this occasion. It was the greatest honour of my life that I was invited to speak to this young generation of Islam that had seen the vision of Indian nationality which succeeded in passing a Constitution.

whose essential creed was co-operation with the sister community. Four years later in this very city of Lucknow you are able to say that you shall have Home Rule. We will not ask for it, we will create it out of our own capacity, out of our inviolable unity, the unity of the Hindu and the Musalman."

The Congress had a record attendance of delegates. There were no less than 2350 delegates. Bombay had 2259. About 4000 visitors of whom about 500 were ladies were present. It was observed that most of the delegates were young men below 35. The Congress bore clear indications of the New Era. It was the Congress of the young in age and the young in spirit. It was the Congress for Swaraj.

Many resolutions were moved, some of extraordinary interest. The Press Act resolution moved by Mr. B. G. Horniman, the stalwart friend of India and gifted Editor of the *Bombay Chronicle*, the Patna University Bill resolution moved by Principal Paranjpye, and the one on National Education moved by Mr. G. S. Arundale. Lucknow was also the first Congress to protest against the lawless use of the Defence of India Act. It must be mentioned also that Mrs. Sarojini Naidu was one of the speakers on the Arms Act resolution, raising her voice "on behalf of the disinherited manhood of her country". She asked "Shall not the greater portion of India—British India—take a

lesson from that one Native State, Hyderabad, that knows how to trust the loyalty of its subjects? In the hour of need have not we in our millions, we women of India, sent our sons and our brothers to shed their blood on the battlefields of Flanders and France, Gallipoli and Mesopotamia? And when the hour comes for thanks, shall we not say to them for whom we fought, when the terror and tumult of hate shall cease, and life is refashioned, and when there is peace, and when you offer memorial thanks to the comrades that fought in dauntless ranks, and you honour the deeds of the deathless: "Remember the blood of my martyred sons, and, remembering, restore to India her lost manhood." But the resolution comparable to the magnitude of the assembly and voicing forth the determination of united India was the Self-Government resolution. The forces of the Congress were all focussed on it. The best speakers and the foremost leaders of all schools and communities expounded the great subject and articulated the feelings of India. One whole day was dedicated to the discussion of this question. Never before was known so memorable a discussion and such unbounded enthusiasm.

The resolution ran as follows :

(a) That having regard to the fact that the great communities of India are the inheritors of ancient civilisations and have shown great capacity for Government and administration, and to

the progress in education and public spirit made by them during a century of British Rule, and further having regard to the fact that the present system of Government does not satisfy the legitimate aspirations of the people and has become unsuited to the existing conditions and requirements, the Congress is of opinion that the time has come when His Majesty the King-Emperor should issue a Proclamation announcing that it is the aim and intention of the British policy to confer Self-Government on India at an early date.

(b) That this Congress demands that a definite step should be taken towards Self-Government by granting the reforms contained in the Scheme prepared by the All-India Congress Committee in concert with the Reform Committee appointed by the All-India Muslim League.

(c) That in the construction of the Empire India shall be lifted from the position of a dependency to that of an equal partner in the Empire with the Self-Governing Dominions.

In every way this was quite an unique resolution. It is no longer in view of the proven loyalty of India that the rights of Self-Government are demanded. It is no longer a mere statement that the time has arrived for the attainment of that freedom. The preamble sets forth indisputable facts. In the third clause the demand is definite. "Equal partner in the Empire," no

trusty dependent. The second clause refers to a detailed and definite scheme of reforms having behind it the support of the entire country and decided upon by the elected representative of the Hindu and the Muslim communities. "Moderates" and "Extremists" cremated their old distinctions of moderation and extremism, stood upon a common platform with Parsis and Muhammadans and offered the strength of their support to the Congress-League Scheme of Reforms. But the Congress was clear that it was only the minimum, the irreducible limit to a policy of "caution" and "statesmanship". Speaking of the Scheme of Reforms, Lokamanya Tilak said :

"I do not care to call it by any name. I do not mind the name but I believe you have hardly realised the importance and character of that Scheme of Reform. Let me tell you that it is far more liberal than the Irish Home Rule Bill, and then you can understand what possibilities it carries with it. It may not be complete Home Rule, but is more than a beginning of it. It may not be complete Self-Government, but is far better than Local Self-Government. It may not be Swaraj in the wider sense of the word, but it is far better than Swadeshi and Boycott. It is in fact a synthesis of all the Congress resolutions passed during the last thirty years, a synthesis which will help us all to proceed in a definite and responsible manner. We cannot now afford to spend our energy on all the resolutions on the

Public Services, the Arms Act and sundry others. All is comprehended and included within this one resolution."

Babu Surendranath moved the resolution with his usual eloquence. Referring to the warning of Lord Chelmsford that revolutionary tendencies should be guarded against equally with undue conservatism, the mover said: "We are the friends of reform because it is the surest safeguard against revolution. All history proclaims the truth that reforms indefinitely postponed or tardily carried out, or inadequate in their scope and comprehension, prepare the ground for revolutionary propagandas. God grant that this blunder may not be committed in India". Then he proceeded to answer a few objections. Mr. Curtis said India had no suitable electorates. The speaker asked: "Had you any electorates in the United Kingdom worth the name before the Reform Bill of 1832? Is it not notorious that there were pocket boroughs which were openly bought and sold? And yet no one questioned the competency of English people for Self-Government. Had Japan electorates suitable or otherwise when the Mikado conferred Parliamentary institutions upon that country? Had the Philipinos any electorates qualified or otherwise when the American Republic resolved to concede national independence to the people of the Philippines? The growth and development of electorates is part of the growth and development

of free institutions. They are inseparable and linked together. They act and re-act upon each other and strengthen each other by their mutual interaction." Coming to the argument of unfitness, he said that in ancient times Indians had enjoyed Self-Government, that in the days of the Vedic Rishis the King was an elected monarch. Islam was essentially democratic. And yet, we are told, we Hindus and Musalmans are unfit for Self-Government. When shall we be so fit, may I ask? When will the Bureaucracy think that we are? Dooms-day. Then Babu Surendranath asked: "Why do we want Self-Government?" and answered: "We want Self-Government in the interests of the Empire to which we are so proud to belong. We want Self-Government in the interests of the efficiency of the administration. We want Self-Government for self-protection. And, finally, we want Self-Government for the highest ends of national existence, for the moral and spiritual elevation of our people." Speaking on the last point, he said:

We want Self-Government finally for the highest ends of national existence, for the moral and spiritual elevation of our people. Political inferiority involves moral degradation. It is galling to our self-respect. The mind and the conscience of a free man are not the mind and conscience of a slave. A nation of slaves could never have produced a Patanjali, a Buddha or a

Valmiki. We want Self-Government in order that we might wipe off from our brows the badge of political inferiority and uplift our heads among the nations of the earth so that we may fulfil the great destinies that are in store for us under the blessing of Divine Providence. We want Self-Government not only in our own interests but for the sake of humanity at large. In the morning of the world, on the banks of the Ganges and on the banks of the Jumna, the Vedic Rishis sang those hymns which represent the first yearnings of infant humanity towards the Divine Ideal. In the morning of the world, before the Eternal City had been built on the Seven Hills, we were the spiritual preceptors of mankind. Kashi was flourishing before Babylon. Our past takes us back to the dim twilight of history. In those days when the world was sunk in primæval barbarism we were the guides and instructors of mankind. Has our mission been fulfilled? It has been arrested and will have to be renewed, aye, renewed and fulfilled so that we may rescue humanity from the gross materialism and the perverse moral culture which has heaped the battlefields of Europe with the hecatombs of the dead. But we must be fully equipped before we can adequately discharge the high and exalted function. Self-Government is the indispensable equipment. These are the ideals, the hopes and the aspirations which inspire us in the demand for Self-Government. Our work is not political: it is moral, it is religious. We are, therefore, irresistible and invincible.

To-day is a red letter day in our history. To-day Hindus and Muhammadans and all ranks of the National Party are united on this platform inspired by a common resolve and a common purpose. May the memory of this day be embalmed in the recollections of posterity by the inauguration of a new campaign for the attainment of Self-Government. It is no use our holding a session for three days and then going to sleep for the rest of the year. We must resolve in our hearts and take a vow such as we did in connection with the Swadeshi movement and enter into a solemn league and covenant before God and man that we shall not rest from these labours until we have secured for ourselves the great and inestimable blessing of Self-Government. (Hear, hear and applause.)

Mrs. Besant seconded the Resolution. The speech she delivered on the subject was so impressive, so full of close and cogent argumentation that it may with profit be reproduced :

You have just heard the scheme of reforms which has been passed by the All-India Congress Committee in conference with the Reform Committee appointed by the All-India Muslim League. Those reforms are alluded to in the second clause and you will see that they are meant for a transition period to be passed as soon as possible and to lead up to that change which is to come with the reconstruction of the Empire after the War—

that change to Self-Government of India on a footing of equality with the Self-Governing Dominions. It is to the last clause that I propose to ask your attention. The last clause says that in the reconstruction of the Empire after the War India shall be lifted from the position of a Dependency to that of an equal partner in the Empire with the Self-Governing Dominions. With regard to that, it is said that you ought not to embarrass the British Government by raising such a question as this in the middle of the War. We are only following the example of the Self-Governing Dominions. We are only taking the advice of Mr. Bonar Law who advised the Dominions to strike the iron while it was red hot. After the reconstruction of the Empire the iron will be cold and where, I ask, is the blacksmith who allows the red hot iron to cool down before he strikes it to the shape and form he wants.

We hear at this moment much talk about the five nations who are to form a Federated Empire after the War. Where is India? Oh! she is not one of the five. She is a coloured people, and coloured people are to have the right of domination over them by colourless people. Coloured people have only the duty of submission. (Cries of shame.) But that is not the doctrine that this coloured nation at least is willing to accept. We are not uncivilised natives of South Africa that we should bow our heads beneath the yoke of the five nations. It is not lack of colour

that makes clever brains. The Lord Buddha and the Christ were coloured men. All the founders of religion were coloured men. Have the colourless produced a single founder of religion? We will never bow beneath the yoke of the Colonies.

We are told not to spread bitterness against the Colonies. I think the writer of that has begun at the wrong end. Have we excluded the Colonies from India, because they could not talk or write some language of which they knew nothing? Was it this country or was it Australia that passed that Law? Have we said that no North American or Canadian should come to India unless he comes straight from port to port when there is no line of ships that carried straight from one to the other, or has Canada made that law against the Indian people? What is this talk of bitterness? Bitterness is caused by the Colonies and not by India. Let this advice be given to the Colonies and not to India. The Indian had no share in the making of that feeling.

Oh! We are not fit to govern ourselves and we are divided. Are we? We have shown our power of union during the last few years. Our Congress was split into half nine years ago. But we stand a United Congress to-day. Hindus and Muslims had a gulf between them, not in Kashmir where a Hindu Prince rules, not in the Deccan where a Muslim Prince is the Sovereign, but only in the British Raj, and that gulf has been bridged by

Muslims and Hindus themselves, and we have linked our hands in love, in trust, in mutual forbearance, in mutual respect, and we stand to-day a united nation that nothing shall hereafter break asunder.

Oh ! You are not fit for Self-Government. You are ignorant. Who has the right to cast that reproach at the masses of our people ? It was the late Mr. Gopal Krishna Gokhale who tried to win free and compulsory education cautiously, carefully, step by step, for he was not an impatient idealist in the world, however much his heart went with impatient idealism. An Indian tried to educate his brethren, but who is it that denied it ? It was the Imperial Council with its perpetual majority of officials. Does it then lie in the mouths of Englishmen to reproach us with ignorance when the Government would not educate our people and would not help us to do it.

Then they say : "You cannot help yourselves." Did we pass the Arms Act ? Did we take away weapons from the hands of our people ? Since 1878 there has been no pure-blooded Indian, whether Hindu or Musalman, who could possess arms without a licence, to the gaining of which all sorts of difficulties are attached. Is it India's fault that it is undefended ? For thirty years the Congress has asked for the repeal of the Arms Act and for permission to volunteer and to open Military Colleges, and those who have treated

every demand with contempt say that we are not fit to govern ourselves because we cannot defend ourselves. It is only Home Rule that will enable us to defend ourselves. Until we have Home Rule we cannot be armed as we should be. .

Oh ! It is said there are divisions among you. There are none in England ! (Laughter.) Before the great War in 1914, which saved the Empire, the United Kingdom was on the brink of Civil War. Was England then unfit for Self-Government ? How far was England educated when the Reform Bill of 1832 was passed ? Has England always been so quiet under difficulties ? In 1913 were there no strikes paralysing railway traffic and threatening London with starvation, because of the lack of transport, as all men engaged in transport work were on strike and yet England is fit for Self-Government, and you, quiet and industrious, are not ?

As regards the objection that educated Indians are in a minority : the educated of every country are in a minority but they are not in so small a minority as the God-given Rulers of to-day. The educated minority know the people and the English do not. People come here to learn about the Indian Nation. They live in Government Camps and they go about with Government officers. They make friends of those who have slandered India. Is that the way to learn what Indians think ?

What idea can they get of the village life when they see it under such circumstances ?

Then we are told that we are injuring the prestige of the British Nation, and the Press Act is brought down to silence criticism. Have you forgotten that one of the Panjabi papers that described the condition of London was held to have excited hatred and contempt against His Majesty's British subjects and the security of that paper is forfeited? Sir James Meston may think my language emphatic, I am afraid, but we want emphasis in order to make both our rulers and people understand the intolerable condition of things under which India is living to-day.

India has still love for England. India does not want to break the British connection, but the England she loves is not the steel-framed England of the Press Act, the Defence of India Act, the Seditious Meetings Act and the Criminal Law Amendment Act and all those horrible enactments of 1818 and 1827. It is not the England of those things that we love; it is the England of Cromwell, of Hampden and Pym, of Milton and Shelley. It is the England that sheltered the threatened life of Mazzini, the England that welcomed Garibaldi by thousands in her streets as the Liberator of Italy, the England that has been sheltering every political refugee, it is that England that we love. That is the England

that, despite everything else, we still believe in, but she is ignorant and blinded by the people who come here on superficial knowledge and confirm her in her blunders instead of enlightening her.

England is fighting for her life and has called India to help her with as much as India is able to give. Oh! India would have given so much more, so many more men, so many more volunteers in order to help England in the day of her need. But England at her peril calls on Indian soldiers to fight for the liberty of Belgium and the sacredness of treaties, and then sends those soldiers back home to find their people still in bondage and treaties disregarded, torn in pieces and thrown aside. That which England fights for in Europe she must admit here. There is only one thing which makes a nation fit for freedom, and that is the heart to aspire after it and the will which is determined to have it. England will not give you freedom, no nation has ever been given freedom; but England will pass an Act of Parliament establishing freedom when she realises that you are in earnest, that you are tired of being played with, that you are determined to be free, and India's loyalty rests on a belief in the old England, and not in the English bureaucracy, and her loyalty is the reasoned loyalty of freeman; she has asked for her place in the Empire, and until that is granted, there will be danger in the path of progress.

Lok. Tilak was the next speaker. The resolution he was to speak upon embodied the principles for which he had been fighting. It is that for which we have been fighting, for which the Congress has been fighting for the last thirty years. The first note of it was heard ten years ago on the banks of the Hughli and it was sounded by the Grand Old Man of India, the Parsi patriot, Dadabhai Naoroji. Then he made a momentous statement. "It has been said by some that we have yielded too much to our Muhammadan brethren. I am sure I represent the sense of the Hindu community all over India when I say that we could not have yielded too much. I do not care if the rights of Self-Government were offered to the Muhammadan community only. I would not care if they are granted to Rajputs. I would not care if they are granted to the lowest classes of the Hindu population, provided the British Government considers them more fit than the educated classes of India for exercising those rights. I do not care if those rights are granted to any section of the Indian community." He added: "Nothing can be gained by passing resolutions on this platform by the simple union of the two races, the Hindus and the Muhammadans, and the two parties, the Moderates and the Nationalists. The union is intended to create a certain power and energy amongst us, and unless that power and energy are exercised, you cannot hope to succeed, so great are the obstacles in your way. You must now prepare

to fight out the scheme. In short, I do not care if the sessions of the Congress are held no longer. I believe it has done its work as a deliberative body. The next part is the Executive."

The Hon. Mr. Muzhur-ul-Haque said : " You must have a propaganda throughout the country. And let our Rulers see for themselves that every man, every woman and every child of India is bent on and determined to have Self-Government."

Sir Dinshaw Petit came next on behalf of the Parsi community, and answering the objection that the Parsis who now held high appointments would lose, and not gain, by casting their lot with the Hindus and Muslims, said : " Do not for a moment think that the Parsis, when they are under the Government of Home Rule, will, in any way, suffer in that direction, but, admitting for argument's sake for a moment that they did, would it be right and sensible to expect that for the benefit of a few thousand Parsis, 320 millions of people should be denied their birthright and their privilege ? "

Babu Bepin Chandra Pal, in further supporting the resolution, said : " It (Self-Government) is the first article of the Congress. It is the first article of Indian Nationality ; it is the first article of every self-respecting Nation, every civilised Nation in humanity. It is the first article of every man and woman who feels within himself or

herself the call of the Divine. It is the first article of every *Yogi*, of every *Jnani*, of every *Bhakta*, because Self-Government is the pith and foundation, not only of the life temporal, but also of the life spiritual."

The Hon. Mr. Tej Bahadur Sapru said : " Self-respect alone demands that, like other self-respecting nations of the world, we should be allowed a free hand to work out our own destiny and that we should not be treated as perpetual schoolboys in politics."

Mrs. Sarojini Naidu came next. " I am merely a spectator from the watch-tower of dreams and I watched the swift and troubled, sometimes chequered but nevertheless indomitable time-spirit marching on in a pageant of triumphs to the desired goal." The ultimate decision is yours and who will deny you the birthright of freedom if the millions of India speak with one voice and say : " Ours is the right of freedom. We claim it, we take it, you dare not deny to us the birthright of humanity, centuries have gone by ; old divisions are healed, old wounds are covered ; instead of building our regeneration on hatred and division, we stand to-day building our national future on the secure imperishable foundation of love and united service. Each of us has gained that living consciousness, that it is united service for the Motherland that constitutes the supremest hope of to-morrow. There is no one so mean, so

weak, so selfish, as not to think that in the service of the Motherland his joy is greater than all personal joys; in suffering for Her cause is the supremest consolation in our present sorrow and in Her worship is the absolution of sin. To live for Her is the most victorious triumph of life; to die for Her is to achieve the priceless crown of immortality. Let us then offer our life unanimously as a tribute at the feet of the Motherland; for as the great prophet of Islam says, under the feet of the Mother lies paradise."

Mr. Joseph Baptista said: "To my great surprise I find that within the past few months Home Rule has become a popular cry throughout the whole country. There are no heretics among us. All believe in the Creed of Home Rule. No dissenters, no quakers or shakers. We are all militant Home Rulers. To what is this great change to be attributed and to whom must we be grateful in this hour of trial? You must give credit to the person who deserves that credit and I say most emphatically that credit is due to the magnetic personality and dynamic energy of our friend and sister, Mrs. Besant." He added "you have 40 or 50 millions of people pledged to starvation from day to day. Is this the structure of the Empire with which you are satisfied? Anglo-Indian architects have had a free hand for the last 150 years, and this is the Empire they have produced. Can any one say that this is a mansion befitting the ancient civilisation and the latent

potentialities of the country? Is this not a glorified chawl"?

And Pandit Madan Mohan said in proposing a vote of thanks to Babu Ambica Charan Mozumdar: "The reforms which we have put forward do not represent the maximum that we desire, but the minimum that is necessary."

The extracts are rather too many though certainly not tedious. They are given only to show the advance in national feeling. The speeches show most unmistakably India's confidence in herself. They voice forth the national determination. It is necessary to notice that begging and mendicancy has been treated with the scantiest courtesy by all the speakers. Time was when India expected an act of voluntary benignity from Britain. We had only to wait slowly improving ourselves until at last we would have advanced from precedent to precedent to the goal of our labours. Even at the time of the Bombay Congress, malcontents were not wanting who distrusted India's worthiness. But the day had gone by at Lucknow both for political mendicants and political sceptics. Indians were determined. Hindu, Muslim and Parsi, Moderate and Extremist, men and women, young and old stood determined and no power on earth could shake their determination. India realised that the struggle with the Bureaucracy would be no joke, that persecution and suffering would

be the lot of the devoted children of Freedom. But they were prepared for it, and was it not said by Mrs. Naidu: "In suffering for Her cause is the supremest consolation in our present sorrow and in Her worship is the absolution of sin." The right of Self-Government was not only regarded as a practical problem of fateful importance, but was demanded with that firmness of accent and unflinching eye which none but the lovers of freedom can command. India did not beg her birthright at the door of Great Britain. She was a princess till then a minor, but now grown to her maturity. She claimed the majesty of the Queen and who could tell her nay? She said: "Mine is the birthright of freedom. I claim it, I take it, you dare not deny me the birthright of humanity."

V

. Between Lucknow and Calcutta lies an eventful and stirring record of events. The Calcutta Congress was expected in the beginning to be the most fiery, the most indignant and the most determined of all held during these thirty years and more. The middle of the year saw the internment of Mrs. Besant. In June she was served with the order and the three months of her exile witnessed unparalleled demonstration of anger and protest. The country would not brook the blow struck at the strongest protagonist of Home Rule who had done more than any other single

person to drive that question into an immediate and inevitable issue. Swadeshi was preached once again not only as a patriotic vow meant to regenerate our industries, but as a political weapon to strike at the commerce of Great Britain. Processions and public meetings were frequently prohibited and the country began seriously to consider the question of Passive Resistance. The Provincial Congress Committees were returning Mrs. Besant to the presidential chair. It was felt that the best reply to the Government of India in the matter of internments would be to elect the object of their displeasure to the greatest honour which India confers on her chosen workers. Her release in time for the Congress was then unlikely. But it was decided that if her presence was impossible, her work should be done for her by some other and Sir S. Subramaniam generously volunteered to discharge the arduous task. But the country was calmed and public feeling subsided on the release of Mrs. Besant and the declaration of policy by Mr. Montagu.

The Mesopotamian Commission brought about a salutary change in the India Office. The Report revealed a story of bungling and incompetence in Mesopotamia and subjected the Bureaucracy to the severest criticism. Mr. Chamberlain's resignation was inevitable, and Mr. Montagu came to the office of the Secretary of State for India. His personal knowledge of India, as his eminently liberal temperament, fitted

him, supremely to hold the office of ministry for India. He knew that the greatest and most immediate need was a declaration of policy. And after consultation with the Government of India and the Cabinet he issued the following epoch-making declaration on the 20th August :

“ The policy of His Majesty’s Government, with which the Government of India are in complete accord, is that of increasing the association of Indians in every branch of the administration and the gradual development of self-governing institutions with a view to the progressive realisation of responsible Government in India as an integral part of the British Empire. They have decided that substantial steps in this direction should be taken as soon as possible, and that it is of the highest importance, as a preliminary to considering what these steps should be, that there should be a free and informal exchange of opinion between those in authority at Home and in India. His Majesty’s Government have accordingly decided, with His Majesty’s approval, that I should accept the Viceroy’s invitation to proceed to India to discuss these matters with the Viceroy and the Government of India, to consider with the Viceroy the views of Local Governments, and to receive the suggestions of representative bodies and others. I would add that progress in this policy can only be achieved by successive stages. The British Government and the Government of India, on whom the responsibility lies for the welfare and

advancement of the Indian peoples, must be judges of the time and measure of each advance, and they must be guided by the co-operation received from those upon whom new opportunities of service will thus be conferred and by the extent to which it is found that confidence can be reposed in their sense of responsibility. Ample opportunity will be afforded for the public discussion of the proposals which will be submitted in due course to Parliament."

The declaration which was followed within a few days by the release of Mrs. Besant had the effect of allaying the public ferment. The tone of the memorable speech of Lord Chelmsford in September in opening the September session in the Imperial Legislative Council denoted the change of temper and policy in the Government of India. The declaration announced by Mr. Montagu spoke also of his visit to India to study the question of reforms. It was necessary, therefore, that there ought to be a calm atmosphere undisturbed by agitation and discontent. The Country recognised the need and kept up sometimes in the face of severest provocation the calm atmosphere. What it means and what its realities are can be seen from this passage in Mrs. Besant's presidential address :

" The attitude of India has changed to meet the changed attitude of the Government of India and Great Britain. But let none imagine that that

consequential change of attitude connotes any change in her determination to win Home Rule. She is ready to consider terms of peace, but it must be peace with honour, and honour in this connection means Freedom. If this be not granted, an even more vigorous agitation will begin."

It is also necessary that the reactionary forces should be made a passing reference to in order to give a clear idea of the background to the 32nd Congress held at Calcutta. The anti-Brahmana movement begun at Madras by a set of malcontents grew in noise and fury, if not in real power and strength. One result of this movement was the thorny question of communal representation. But this principle was in one case recognised in the Congress-League Scheme. The Presidency Association was the protest against the self-appointed championship of Dr. Nair and Company. The Muslims too, a few of them, set up here and there a camp of the reactionaries. But the strongest opposition came from the European community in India. Their Associations protested madly and carried on throughout an uproarious campaign against all probabilities of reform. But their agitation was described by the Viceroy as a minor excitement to which no importance was to be attached. It ended on the constructive side in what was known as the joint scheme which had the support of a few Indians of Calcutta. According to this Scheme Indians were to be given the responsibility over

some select departments, with powers limited, and the way in which these were discharged was to determine the measure of our worth and capacity. This was universally repudiated by all thinking sections of India.

But there were gleams of light and hope. Sir Valentine Chirol and Sir Bampfylde Fuller, two of the worst reactionaries, saw the need of reform and the danger of postponements. Public opinion in England was gradually getting favourable to Indian demands. The Labour Union, representing some thousands of men, pledged themselves to support the cause of Indian Home Rule. Such, indeed, was the feeling that the endeavours of Lord Sydenham to start a counter-agitation could not meet with any success.

VI

The Congress met on the 26th, 27th, 28th and 29th of 1917. Mrs. Besant's presidential address was a masterly study of the situation. It was studded with facts which made her position impregnable. It reasoned out India's demand for Home Rule with facts, figures and arguments which would convince those who are willing to be open-minded. Of that best kind of eloquence which dispenses with declamation, the address was a sustained example. It would be difficult to attempt even an extract of a speech so long and so exhaustive. But we must refer to one

or two points in it which it is well specially to notice. Her analysis of the new spirit as due to some special forces has an intimate bearing on the present politics of the country. The special forces alluded to are :

- (a) The awakening of Asia ;
- (b) Discussions abroad on alien rule and Imperial reconstruction ;
- (c) Loss of belief in the superiority of the white race ;
- (d) The awakening of the merchants ;
- (e) The awakening of the women to claim their ancient position, and
- (f) The awakening of the masses.

After declaring that it was India's birthright to enjoy her freedom and that she had deserved that birthright by services add sacrifices, she defined the immediate objective as follows :

“ With regard to our new objective, I suggest that we should ask the British Government to pass a Bill during 1918 establishing Self-Government in India on the lines resembling those of the Commonwealth of Australia to come into force on the date laid down therein, preferably in 1923, at the latest 1928, intermediate five or ten years being occupied with the transference of Government from British to Indian hands, maintaining British ties as in the Dominions. Transference may be made in stages beginning with some such

scheme as that of the Congress-League, with its widened electorate, the essentials being half the Executive Councils being elected, by elected members of Legislatures, the control of the purse and a substantial majority in the Supreme and Provincial Councils. We asked first for the representation which was supposed to give influence. This has proved useless. Now we ask for partnership in the governing of India. The Government has power of dissolution and veto, the people have the power of the purse. This is the second stage in the partnership of equal co-operation. The third stage will be that of complete Home Rule to come automatically in 1923 or 1928."

Mrs. Besant concluded :

" To see India free, to see her hold up her head among the Nations, to see her sons and daughters respected everywhere, to see her worthy of her mighty past, engaged in building a yet mightier Future—is not this worth working for, worth suffering for, worth living and worth dying for? Is there any other land which evokes such love for her spirituality, such admiration for her literature, such homage for her valour as this glorious Mother of Nations, from whose womb went forth the races that now, in Europe and America, are leading the world? And has any land suffered as our India has suffered, since her sword was broken on Kurukshetra, and the

peoples of Europe and of Asia swept across her borders, laid waste her cities, and discrowned her Kings. They came to conquer, but they remained to be absorbed. At last, out of those mingled peoples, the divine Artificer has welded a Nation, compact not only of her own virtues, but also of those her foes had brought to her, and gradually eliminating the vices which they had also brought.

After a history of millennia, stretching far back out of the ken of mortal eyes; having lived with, but not died with, the mighty civilisations of the Past; having seen them rise and flourish and decay, until only their sepulchres remained, deep buried in earth's crust; having wrought, and triumphed, and suffered, and having survived all changes unbroken; India, who has been verily the Crucified among Nations, now stands on this her Resurrection morning, the Immortal, the Glorious, the Ever-Young; and India shall soon be seen, proud and self-reliant, strong and free, the radiant Splendour of Asia, as the Light and the Blessing of the World."

A resolution which roused great interest and exceeding indignation was the one against the internment of Muhammad Ali and Shaukat Ali. It was appropriately moved by Mr. B. G. Tilak. How much the Muslim brothers were loved by the Congress and how much the action of the Government was resented was clearly evidenced

by the magnificent ovation given to Begum Abadi Bano Saheba by the thousands assembled at the Congress. Her wonderful heroism was well-known to the entire country, and when asked to attend the Muslim League, she insisted on attending the Congress before going to the League. She would not allow the sons she loved to give any undertaking which conflicted with their allegiance to religion and country. She said once "I want Government to know that if, in order to escape from their sufferings, they will promise anything in the least contrary to the dictates of their faith or the interests of their country, God will, I feel sure, give enough strength to my mother's heart and these palsied hands, to throttle them that instant, dear as they are to me and strong and stalwart as they look." It was the children of such a woman that were chosen to dwell in the prison cell of Chindwara. The country had agitated, the leaders had tried their best, but the evidence of the C.I.D. balanced the feeling of the country. The Congress naturally protested and feeling rose to fever-heat when the resolution was moved by one who had himself been in prison and in exile and one who used to be 'scoffed at as an orthodox Brahmin and a violent anti-Muhammadan Hindu. The Congress did not, however, do all that was necessary and possible for the minor internees of the Panjab and Bengal, young men many of them, without the name, the influence and resources of a Besant or a Muhammad Ali. There

was feeling reference to them, no doubt, in the concluding speech of Mrs. Besant. But that was hardly sufficient.

The resolution with which we are most concerned is the one on Self-Government. It was moved in a speech of usual eloquence by Babu Surendranath Bannerji. The resolution was as follows :

“ This Congress expresses its grateful satisfaction over the pronouncement made by His Majesty’s Secretary of State for India, on behalf of the Imperial Government, that its object is the establishment of Responsible Government in India.

“ This Congress strongly urges the necessity for the immediate enactment of a Parliamentary Statute providing for the establishment of Responsible Government in India, the full measure to be attained within a time limit to be fixed in the Statute itself at an early date.

“ This Congress is emphatically of opinion that the Congress-League Scheme of Reforms ought to be immediately introduced by the Statute as the first step in the process.”

The special feature in this resolution is the demand for a Parliamentary Statute in which the date is to be fixed when India shall have the full measure of Responsible Self-Government.

Mr. Bannerji was followed by Mr. M.A. Jinnah who made a very useful and wise suggestion. The Congress and the Muslim League, he said, would do well to hold a special session at the time when Mr. Montagu will formulate his scheme of reforms. Mr. B. C. Pal who spoke next voiced the more advanced opinion of Bengal. He stood for the demand of absolute provincial autonomy and favoured the School which wanted full Home Rule at once. But there was a more moderate section which wanted to cling to the letter of the Congress-League Scheme. It is highly significant of the distance we have travelled, the sense of conciliation and the spirit of compromise which governed the deliberations of the Congress. Strangely enough, as it might seem, Mr. Tilak spoke for compromise, and the opinion of the leaders was that the Congress and Country should be united in this crisis. There were numerous amendments which expressed discontent with the resolution as it was, but they were all withdrawn in response to Mrs. Besant's fervent appeal for compromise and conciliation. The more forward spirits might advance on their own account but it was better for them to wait a while and take the Country with them. This view prevailed naturally, and the original resolution was put to vote and unanimously carried by the Congress.

So far as Self-Government is concerned the Calcutta Congress will be memorable not as an angry session with delegates seething with

discontent, but as a session comparatively quiet and peaceful, with a more cheerful outlook and sunnier days in the future. There was no sense of impending doom, nor even a sense of powerful forces arrayed in opposition. There was a confident poise of hopes and aspirations, a clear and unclouded heaven, and the possibility of better days in the near future. Mr. Bannerji referred to it in the speech he made on Self-Government, and the consciousness was there in the mind of every one of the 5000 delegates gathered there. On the banks of the Hooghli was declared the battle-cry of Swaraj by Dadabhai Naoroji. On the self-same banks met ten years later, but without the ancient patriarch of our political life, on the self-same bank met his children to mourn his loss. But if they mourned his loss, they were gratified, they rejoiced to find that the cause for which he lived was so near fulfilment. The number of delegates which rose to 2500 at Lucknow doubled to 5000 and showed the remarkable leap in the public spirit and patriotism of the people. The 5000 delegates and the 10,000 visitors, also the thousands and tens of thousands outside the Congress pavilion here declared their will, their longing and their determination. Mr. Montagu has been in the country studying the situation. The country has spoken in a thousand ways. And we are now looking forward to what Mr. Montagu and his race will do. The issues are great, and if we have signed a political truce, we have not yet signed the

terms of peace. As Mrs. Besant well put it in her presidential address, "India is ready to consider terms of peace, but it must be peace with honour and honour in this connection means Freedom. If this be not granted, an even more vigorous agitation will begin."



CHAPTER VII

Conclusion

Such, briefly told, is the history of the Congress. It has been the purpose of this book to show that the Home Rule ideal is no new fangled invention suddenly foisted by alien hands on a foreign stock. The Congress from the very commencement kept the goal of Self-Government clearly in view. It is true that the First Congress of 1885 passed no special resolution on Self-Government, but the notification which called it into existence clearly stated that one of the objects of the Movement was "indirectly to form the germ of an Indian Parliament which, if properly conducted, will constitute in a few years an unanswerable reply to the assertion that India is still wholly unfit for any form of representative institutions". The First Congress also passed a resolution on the Legislative Councils in which a clear demand was made for a considerable addition of elected Indian members. This was the germ of the Self-Government resolutions of 1906, 1914, 1915, 1916 and 1917. It has been since reaffirmed at every session of the Congress, and the Fifth Congress at Bombay gave it a definite form in the draft bill of Mr. Charles Bradlaugh. The ideal of Self-Government was, however, steadily kept in mind as the addresses of the Presidents

and Congress leaders can show. It was, however in 1906, that a definite declaration was made. The Congress, which had so far an unbroken and continuous career, now split into two. But it was a happy circumstance that the seceders did not set up a rival organisation. For that would have clearly meant disunity which years and years of hard work might not have repaired. The Convention Congress worked on, and if it did nothing else specially remarkable, it did this certainly most invaluable service, that it kept the Congress going until 1914. Since we have had a new chapter, Madras made the promising commencement, Bombay carried it by many a stride forward, Lucknow held the standard boldly aloft and Calcutta looked on it with the silence and peace of hope.

It is interesting to notice what exactly drifted the Congress definitely on to the demand of immediate Self-Government. It is believed by some that the declaration for Self-Government is not the logical outcome of the past history of the Congress, but the result, by no means wholesome, of adventitious causes. It is supposed by these critics that it has been led by the nose by clever and designing persons, presumably for purposes of their own. All this is atrocious calumny both on the Congress and the persons implied in the criticism. Self-Government as an ideal was not unfamiliar either to India or to England. From very early days that has been the great hope of India's

workers. It came forcibly to the mind of India in the days of repression which roughly date with the commencement of this century. From the days of Mr. Tilak's first imprisonment there has been felt in the Maharatta country the bitterness of subjection to an irresponsible Bureaucracy. The Curzonian regime distinguished itself with measures which curtailed even such freedom as we once enjoyed and the Partition of Bengal was the signal to the most stormy agitation which India has known. Repression and coercion came in the wake of that agitation, and out of the oppression people suffered rose the cry of Swaraj for India. The success of Native States in matters of administration, the magnificent way in which these States worked modern principles of government and civic life showed clearly what Indians could do. The rise of Japan, till a few years ago a nation unknown, and its victories over an European power, showed India the possibilities of Eastern people. The Grand Old Man of India proclaimed India's desire in 1906. But differences arose which sundered the Congress. Ten years had to pass before they re-united. Meanwhile the War was declared and India assumed a new form when looked at from the international point of view. The contribution to the resources of the Allies which this Country made with a readiness and abundance equal to that of any other combatant power pushed it into the world's notice in a way truly unique. It was a psychological hour and India had to

take up Mr. Bonar Law's advice: "Strike while the iron is hot." Mrs. Besant joined the Congress at this critical hour and popularised the ideals of freedom all over the land and they spread with surprising rapidity. We have known the subsequent history.

But there is a psychological reason. The Congress had agitated for various important reforms for 30 years with a wonderful patience and perseverance. It was free to that august body to be extravagant and vain, but it had statesmanship enough to see the value of restraint, forbearance and moderation. None of its demands was unreasonable. Nor would it have cost the Government much to have conceded them. India might have sat with arms folded and speech benumbed into the silence of death, or risen in arms to wrest from an alien oppressor her inalienable and God-given right of freedom. But the greatest and noblest nation had charge of her destinies. Its statesmen and its monarchs had given solemn pledges and issued solemn Proclamations guaranteeing respect for those rights of humanity. Hence that touching trust so often expressed from 1885 to 1917, that moving faith, that unflinching confidence in Britain's sense of justice and honour and its love of freedom for herself and for others. But the Bureaucracy of the land, intent upon keeping India a close preserve for their own advantage, jealous of the growing spirit of a nation of destiny, have continuously

treated these Charters and Pledges as mere scraps of paper. India has gone on expanding, but this caste-ridden set of priests still keep chanting their meaningless incantations, and offer their incense of superstition to idols that ought to be shattered into dust. It is this disparity between the spirit of the people and the spirit of the Bureaucracy, this antagonism of national hope and oligarchic narrowness, which taught the people of the land that the demand of small and isolated reforms would not do and that the country should declare for a thorough and radical change in the system of Government.

We shall consider only a few of the reforms which the Congress has so long been demanding. The expansion of the Legislative Councils allowing for one-half of elected members has been a demand even older than the Congress. Legislative power was asked for by a loyal and trustworthy people, so that with their closer touch and deeper knowledge of their own problems they might enact such laws as would justify the exalted functions of a Legislature: Congress after Congress has reaffirmed the resolution. And what have we been given? The Councils Act of 1892 which was only meant as a foil to Bradlaugh's Bill was hurriedly passed, but it did not in any way better the situation. Then came Lord Morley's Reforms (1908) so late that they had not only lost their full grace and efficacy but missed the useful influence of preventing the Surat Split. The

men on the spot framed the notorious rules which simply neutralised a fairly liberal scheme. Mr. Bannerji had said even before the Councils Bill of 1892 that our Councils were shams and farces. And seven years after the Reforms of Lord Morley, Pandit Madan Monan, not to speak of Surendranath himself, repeated the verdict.

Consider again the separation of judicial and executive functions. From the very beginning this has been demanded. Lord Dufferin called it "A counsel of perfection". We add, it is simple justice. Arguments have been used, reason has been exhausted, patience has been beaten to death. But Bureaucratic obstinacy is yet unconquered. What is more instructive, the Native States have introduced the Reforms with great success. Baroda and Gwalior have done it.

We have asked for the holding of Simultaneous Examinations and for the opening out to Indians of the higher branches of the administration. We have claimed it as British subjects, taking our stand on the Queen's Proclamation. All we have gained is the raising of the age limit, a trifle in comparison with the larger issues of the question. Mr. Gokhale said before the Welby Commission that of the 2338 appointments carrying a salary of above Rs. 10,000 a year, only 60 were held by Indians, thus giving 2·4 per cent of Indians. The Report of the Public Services Commission of 1914

published in 1917 gives a percentage of 2·4 (2909 higher appointments, 71 held by Indians), 4·3 per cent Indians in the Indian Civil Service, and 6·7 per cent in the rest of the higher services. This after a century and a half of British rule in India! The time has sufficed for the rise and fall of Nations.

We have asked for the remedial of poverty. It was the crying of children for bread. But we still have the poverty of the land scowling on us, with half its population on one meal a day and one-fifth on the verge of starvation. Poverty increases, and with it mortality and emigration with all their attendant horrors. But the drain continues and India is bled of forty millions sterling every year.

We have asked for the introduction of free and compulsory primary education. Baroda, Mysore, even Kolhapur, have it. But British India lags behind and her literacy is confined to 2·6 of the population.

We have asked again and again that we should have the right to carry arms, the right to volunteer, and the right to hold commissions in the army. We did not get these when we declared for Self-Government. Even India's proven loyalty would not fetch her these rights of free-manhood.

These are only a few of the instances. Again and again have we demanded them. We have

asked for them in our Legislatures. Painful has been the moderation of our demands, tiresome the sloth of our movements, disgusting our repetitions and reaffirmations. Still we have gained but little. As Pandit Madan Mohan said, "it is now after an experience of 20 years that the conviction has sunk into our hearts that those to whom Providence has entrusted the administration of the affairs of India, the members of the Indian Civil Service as well as the members of the British Parliament have failed and sadly failed to respond to the call of reason and justice." It is this conviction which led India to declare for Home Rule or Swaraj. It was felt that every single individual in the land should be made to feel the responsibility that is his. The country should be filled with a fervent aspiration to win that freedom. The Bureaucracy must go and Responsible Self-Government should come in. The Congress only organised this opinion and the resolutions of the last three Congresses, Madras, Bombay and Lucknow, are only the record of the evolution of this new-born conviction.

But it must not be supposed that the achievements of the Congress are not commensurate with the labours and sacrifices offered on its behalf. While we cannot deny that it has gained but little by way of response to its appeals, we must admit all the splendid things it has done for the good of the people. By way of concessions from the Government it got until 1904 what we

have already noticed. Since, it has secured the annulment of the Partition, the reforms of Lord Morley and the regulations on Indenture. The responsibility for the tardiness of pace in reforms is all on the side of the Government. The Congress, however, could have kept up an agitation more incessant and continuous and concentrated itself even from an earlier day on the question of Self-Government. But we can score up splendid victories on the side of what it has done independently to the people. Most important of all, it has organised the forces of our public life, given them strength and momentum. It has taught working in large combinations, an indispensable training for Self-Government. It has created the consciousness of a National Soul. It has brought all on the same platform and given them a unity of hope and ideal. It has harmonised all the sections of the Indian population into one national whole. It has roused a healthy and educated public opinion in regard to the political problems of India. It has furnished the Government a constitutional opposition which they can utilise to the best advantage if only they knew the value and righteousness thereof. It has roused public spirit and offered the field and the facilities for many of our public men. It has given a tone and character to political agitation, it has created and organised and kept it within strictly constitutional limits. It must be remembered that, if Bengal could carry its stormy agitation against the Partition, if India could help her children in South Africa in

men and in agitation, if the country could rise to the occasion and by the sheer force of public opinion liberate Mrs. Besant and her lieutenants, it is because of the education the Congress has given to the people in political agitation. The Indian Press, the watch-dog of our rights, though it dates from an earlier day, owes its later power and inspiration to the Congress which is the fountain-head of the political hopes, convictions and ideals of the country. If some definite proof was needed to show that the demands of the Congress were not impatient idealism but practical politics, one has only to see how much the Native States have profited by its work. In police reform, in technical education, in industrial concerns, in elementary education, in the separation of Executive and Judicial functions, in the revival of Village Panchayats, in the Public Services, in higher and University education, in the Arms Act and aye, in representative Government, the Native States have felt and profited by the impact of the Congress. It is well to note that this comparison is far from being complementary to the representatives of Great Britain in India. But all the world are fools, and Anglo-India is the only Socrates !

It is this disappointment which furnishes the clue to the psychology of the demand for Home Rule. India, as we said, has outgrown the bureaucratic system. There was a time when the East India Company was

our ruler. But we had outgrown it and the change of government came in 1858, when India was transferred to the Crown. Sixty years more have now passed away and the country has far outgrown its older self. The Bureaucracy must make room for Representative Government without the least delay. Dr. Clark said in the Twenty-third Congress, 1908: "The Russian bureaucrat has got to go. The Indian bureaucrat has got to go also. If the bureaucrat is bad in Europe, he is bad here also." In 1917 Mr. Joseph Baptista said at Bombay: "The bureaucratic system is doomed and we are within sight of the end of the land of promise. Let the bugle sound, and the worlds of bureaucracy will crumble to pieces. When they do crumble to pieces, a new era will be ushered in for India full of promise and hope."

The country is now of one mind, some divisive movements apart, that there is no salvation for it in the hands of the Bureaucracy. It has found out that only a radical change in the machinery of Government, the passing away of the Bureaucracy and the substitution of some form of Representative Government, would remedy the hundred evils of present-day India. The effects of the change of policy and tone in the Congress have resulted in repression. The Lieutenant-Governor of the Panjab, Lord Willingdon of Bombay, Lord Ronaldshay of Bengal and Lord Pentland of Madras delivered themselves

during the last year of statements possibly in response to the call of the Congress for a declaration, which irritated the whole of India. The Press Act and the Defence of India Act have been indiscriminately used against conscientious public workers. The internment of Mrs. Besant, Messrs. Wadia and Arundale was the climax of this repressive policy. The use of coercion only showed that our agitation had begun to tell, while the incarceration of widely revered leaders only raised them much higher than ever before in popular estimation. What was more, their sufferings showed what recompense patriotic labours acquired in the hands of the Bureaucracy. Apart from persecutions which is the immediate and only a passing effect of the agitation, there is this really significant consequence that for the first time the Secretary of State for India has come down to India to consider the question of Post-War reforms. Mr. Montagu's fairness and sympathies for India were distinctly evidenced when he offered his frank and courageous interpretation of the Despatch of August, 1911. A Liberal of the School of Lord Morley, his accession to the office and his tour in India are full of promise. His speech on the Report of the Mesopotamian Commission was the most crushing indictment ever pronounced on the Bureaucracy. After his appointment to India Office he told his constituency that he still held those views. All India looks with great hope to the consequences of his visit. He has, like a sagacious statesman,

cleared his way by the liberation of Mrs. Besant and her comrades from their unjust confinement. The determination of India to have Home Rule and to be content with nothing else than the Congress-League Scheme has been pressed upon him firmly and from all quarters. The claims of India on England's gratitude are weighty ones, for thousands of her men have shed their blood to secure the honour and freedom of England. The revelations of the Mesopotamian Commission have undeceived the mind of England lulled hitherto into a quiet belief in the marvellous powers of officialdom in India. The heart of Mr. Montagu must have an atom of living and intense sympathy to races which like his own have been the oppressed of the world. The clouds which but yesterday had gathered so thick are slowly passing away. But on India falls the high and paramount duty of informing the mind of England.

The last Congress met at a critical moment. The Secretary of State was receiving representations from all concerned in India. The Congress voiced forth India's resolve in unflinching accents. Mrs. Besant was chosen by the suffrages of India to be her spokesman at this most memorable Session. No person could have been more appropriately chosen. On the banks of the Hooghli was first raised the banner of Swaraj. Ten years of struggles and tribulations have since passed away. Ten long years have gone by and events bound to shake the world have

happened and are happening. Systems of Government with centuries behind them have vanished within a day and new systems are holding sway. Ten eventful years had elapsed when the Congress assembled again on the banks of the Hooghli. Let us hope that Calcutta which initiated political agitation in India and has led many a battle to victory will inaugurate also the day of our National realisation. But hopes and prayers will not by themselves do. We must, as Cromwell said, pray to God but keep our powder dry.

England, on her side, has a sacred duty to India. Mr. Montagu has finished his touring in the country, and he has been thoroughly acquainted with the realities of the Indian problem. None of the leaders have left any stone unturned in laying before him the actualities of the situation. The two most influential deputations that waited on him were the Congress-League and the Home Rule League ones. The latter said in the manly way characteristic of every word in its address :

“We place our demand for Home Rule, however, more on the ground of principle than on that of expediency. We resent what Mr. Gokhale called ‘the atmosphere of inferiority’ in which the Indian lives ; what Mr. Bhupendranath Basu described as ‘a bureaucratic administration. . . atrophying the nerves of action, and what is most serious, necessarily dwarfing in us all feeling of self-respect’. We feel what Mr. Asquith lately

called the 'intolerable degradation of a foreign yoke,' and we believe that Great Britain will co-operate with us in the building up of our freedom. Her past struggles for liberty are the guarantee of her present sympathy."

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It would have been well if Mr. Montagu had been present at the Congress at Calcutta. The petitions and memorials and addresses he received and the interviews he granted would indeed be of great use in informing the mind of Mr. Montagu, and in strengthening his hands, were he to embark upon a radical scheme of reform. But he has missed the potency of the united voice of India, the fulness, the fervour and the grandeur of a nation's demand for freedom, because the local Governments kept him chaste within the hangings of the Purdha and would not expose him to the irreverent gaze of fifteen thousand men. But there is reason to be satisfied with what has been presented to him by the country. Our duty so far is discharged. England's yet remains.

But she has to encounter fierce opposition. Anglo-India has cried fire and vengeance even on the Congress-League scheme. Their Associations and Journals carried on for a time an ungoverned campaign of insolence and intimidation. They have now signed a truce as we have done, but their terms are not India's freedom but India's bondage. They

have organisation, resources, and if a far-reaching measure of reform were to be granted, they might repeat all the opprobrious scenes of the Ilbert Bill agitation. Their voices are louder, and they have the gifts of rancour and calumny which Indian agitation may not be able to fight with similar weapons. They have, above all, the support of the Bureaucracy armed with a thousand statutes, with some living, some absolute, some dead, but all with terrible powers of recrudescence. The entire commercial community in India, fattened with years of unchecked feeding on Indian wealth, the missionaries who have ever been insidious enemies of Indian Congress; the planters whose doings in India and elsewhere have ever been a crying scandal; the whole Brotherhood of civilians called the "heaven-born" and gifted therefore with transcendence and eternity; the councils of the country with the dead weight of official majority weighing them down; the various departments of Government accustomed to lord over the country for years and jealous of the privileges which years of irresponsible domination have given them—all these will be up in arms against any real measure of reform ready to fight with the desperate strength usual with giants at the point of vanquishment. One is not sure if even in the European agitation which preceded Mr. Montagu's coming, there were not heard the last loud groans of a passing order of things. There is besides in England the India Council filled with officials superannuated,

effete, withered, men bronzed sometimes by fifty Indian suns and saturated with the undiluted bureaucratic atmosphere in which they have lived and moved and had their being, fossilised relics of exhausted officialism, men to whom death has sent its card of invitation, but men whose hearts overflowing with the milk of human kindness for their brothers in India. There are also men like Lord Sydenham whose pious heart recoils with horror at the irreverence even of Gokhale's pre-war and semi-official proposals, and Sir Valentine Chirol who in spite of his Beaumont—and—Fletcherian Conversion has built for himself an imperishable monument by his "Indian Unrest". There is the British House of Parliament containing members who seriously doubt whether the Hindu is a Brahmin or a Muhammadan, whether Delhi is in China or Central Africa, whether India is under the Crown or the East India Company and who, as Mr. George Yule once remarked, have thrown back the trust of Providence upon God Himself to be looked after as He thinks best. Great and powerful indeed are the forces arrayed against us.

England has to vindicate her traditions and maintain her self-respect by dominating over these un-English forces and by asserting her own true and inmost personality. She has drawn the sword for the freedom of Italy and Greece. She has conferred free institutions on Canada, Australia, even on the Boers of South

Africa. She is giving Home Rule to Ireland. More than all, she has poured out her men, her treasures, her blood, to secure the freedom of Belgium. And she will be the laughing stock of posterity if she denies those rights of freedom to India. She is already a poor third, Russia and America have preceded her. She cannot delay justice to India and retain the boasted name of the mother of freedom. Mrs. Besant spoke truly when she said :

“ The Congress-League Scheme will stand out in the face of the world as India's demand for freedom, and shall Great Britain fighting for liberty on the continent of Europe, pouring out her blood and treasures of the other countries of the continent, shall America, the great Republic, come into the struggle for liberty and England deny to us, where she is all powerful, the liberty she is winning with blood and gold and iron on the battlefields of Europe? No loss of life is needed here, no outpouring of treasure need England pay for India's liberty, only one word which is the word her history has spoken among her own people, one word of our King-Emperor, one word of his Parliament, and India stands unshackled in the face of the rejoicing world. That is all we ask, liberty, but liberty includes in herself all good things that can be given to a nation, all else you can do for yourselves. When once you are free to act, all laws that shake you, you can change when you

have power over your own destiny. And when a nation asks for Liberty and demands it as the right that God has given to every nation and people on earth, who shall dare say 'Nay' to that demand ?”

It is for Britain to answer. Mr. Montagu will soon formulate his proposals of reform in the House of Commons, and India should be in readiness to say Yes or No to them. Judging from the trend of events the outlook seems to be hopeful. The Government here and in England must recognise that reforms in dribblets, autonomy in compartments, will refuse to satisfy the people of India. Nothing short of political power will gratify the throbbing aspirations of the people. Our peace must be with honour and honour here means freedom. Would England grant us the birthright of all nations, the freedom without which nationhood is a farce and unreality? Whether England gives or no, India is determined to have it. The struggle has been long and dreary, many have been the sacrifices we have made. As Mr. Polak said at Karachi, it may be necessary to add more to our sacrifices. It may be necessary that the lovers of that freedom will have to bear the burden of chains and the curse of exile and incarceration. The way may yet be long, and it may not be given to this generation to tread the sacred soil of the promised land. These eyes of ours may not behold that spectacle of ineffable beauty—of an India united, strong

and great, because it is an India free? It may not be ours to exclaim like the Welsh bard on the heights of Snowdon: "Visions of glory, spare my aching sight." But it shall be ours to have fought the battle and fallen in it. It shall be ours to have kept the vigil of the night. The joy and the glory of pioneers shall be ours. It shall be ours to feel with that poet of freedom :

See my children, resolute children,
By those swarms upon our rear, we must
never yield or falter,
Ages back in ghostly millions frowning there
behind us urging,
Pioneers ! O Pioneers !

On and on the compact ranks,
With accessions ever waiting, with the places
of the dead quickly filled,
Through the battle, through defeat moving
yet and never stopping
Pioneers ! O Pioneers !

O to die advancing on !
Are there some of us to droop and die ?
Has the hour come ?
Then upon the march we fittest die, soon
and sure the gap is filled,
Pioneers ! O Pioneers !

Appendices

APPENDIX A

Memorandum of the Nineteen

POST-WAR REFORMS

[We print below the Memorandum submitted to H. E. Viceroy by nineteen additional members of the Imperial Legislative Council with regard to post-War reforms. In all, there are twenty-seven non-official members, of whom two are Anglo-Indians, who were not consulted for obvious reasons, and three were away. The other three Indians refused to sign, *viz.*, (1) Nawab Syed Nawab Ali Chowdhuri, (2) Mr. Abdur Rahim, and (3) Sirdar Bahadur Sirdar Sunder Singh Majithia have been compelled by public opinion to give it a qualified support.]

There is no doubt that the termination of the War will see a great advance in the ideals of Government all over the civilised world, and especially in the British Empire, which entered into the struggle in defence of the liberties of weak and small Nationalities and is pouring forth its richest blood and treasure in upholding the cause of justice and humanity in the international relations of the world. India has borne her part in this struggle and cannot remain unaffected by the new spirit of change for a better state of things.

Expectations have been raised in this country and hopes held out that after the War, the problems of Indian administration will be looked at from a new angle of vision. The people of India have good reasons to be grateful to England for the great progress in her material resources and the widening of her intellectual and political outlook under British rule, and for the steady, if slow, advance in her National life commencing with the Charter Act of India of 1833. Up to 1909 the Government of India was conducted by a bureaucracy almost entirely non-Indian in its composition and not responsible to the people of India. The reforms of 1909 for the first time introduced an Indian element in the direction of affairs in the administration of India. This element was of a very limited character. The Indian people accepted it as an indication on the part of the Government of a desire to admit the Indians into the inner counsels of the Indian Empire. So far as the Legislative Councils are concerned, the numbers of non-official members were merely enlarged with increased facilities for debate and interpellation. The Supreme Legislative Council retained an absolute official majority, and in the Provincial Legislative Councils, where a non-official majority was allowed, such majority included nominated members and the European representatives. In measures largely affecting the people, whether of legislation or taxation, by which Europeans were not directly affected, the European members would naturally support the Government, and the nominated members, being nominees of Government, would be inclined to take the same side. Past experience has shown that this has actually happened on various occasions. The non-official majorities, therefore, in the Provincial Councils, have proved largely illusory and

give no real power to the representatives of the people. The Legislative Councils, whether Supreme or Provincial, are at present nothing but advisory bodies without any power of effective control over the Government, Imperial or Provincial. The people or their representatives are practically as little associated with the real government of the country as they were before the reforms, except for the introduction of the Indian element in the Executive Councils, where again the nomination rests entirely with the Government, the people having no voice in the selection of the Indian members.

The object which the Government had in view in introducing the reforms of 1909 was, as expressed by the Prime Minister in his speech in the House of Commons on the second reading of the Indian Councils Bill (1st April, 1909), that "it was most desirable in the circumstances to give to the people of India the feeling that these Legislative Councils are not mere automatons, the wires of which are pulled by the official hierarchy." This object, it is submitted, has not been attained. Apart from this question of the constitution of the Legislative and Executive Councils, the people labour under certain grave disabilities, which not only prevent the utilisation, but also lead to the wastage, of what is best in them, and are positively derogatory to their sense of National respect. The Arms Act which excludes from its operation Europeans and Anglo-Indians and applies only to the pure natives of the country, the disqualification of Indians for forming or joining Volunteer Corps and their exclusion from the commissioned ranks of the army, are disabilities which are looked upon with an irritating sense of racial differentiation. It would be bad enough

the Government is also alive to the situation is contemplating measures of reform in administration of the country. We feel should avail ourselves of this opportunity respectfully offer to Government our humble suggestions as to the lines on which these reforms should proceed. They must, in our opinion, to the root of the matter. They must give the people real and effective participation in government of the country, and also remove those irritating disabilities as regards the possession of arms and a military career, which induce want of confidence in the people and place them in a position of inferiority and helplessness. In this view we would take the liberty to submit the following measures for consideration and adoption:

1. In all the Executive Councils, Provincial and Imperial, half the number of members should be Indians; the European element in the Executive Councils should, as far as possible, be nominated from the ranks of men trained and educated in the public life of England, so that India may have the benefit of a wider outlook and larger experience of the outside world. It is not absolutely essential that the members of Executive Councils, Indians or Europeans, should have experience of actual administration, for in the case of Ministers in England, the assistance of the permanent officials of the department is always available to them. As regards India we venture to say that a sufficient number of qualified Indians, who can worthily fill the offices of members of the Executive Council and portfolios, is always available. Our short experience in this direction has shown how Indians, Sir S. P. Sinha, Sir Syed Ali Imam, the Mr. Krishnaswami Iyer, Sir Shams-ul-Huda

Sankaran Nair, have maintained a high level administrative ability in the discharge of their duties. Moreover, it is well known that the Native States, where Indians have opportunities, have produced renowned administrators like Sir Salarpur, Sir T. Madhava Rao, Sir Seshadri Aiyar, Sir Bahadur Raghunath Rao, not to mention present administrators in the various Native States of India. The statutory obligation, now existing, that three of the members of the Supreme Executive Council shall be selected from the public services in India, and similar provisions in regard to Provincial Councils, should be improved. The elected representatives of the people should have a voice in the selection of the Indian members of the Executive Councils and for that purpose a principle of election should be adopted.

2. All the Legislative Councils in India should have substantial majority of elected representatives. These representatives, we feel, will watch and safeguard the interests of the masses and the agricultural population with whom they are in closer touch than any European officer, however sympathetic, can possibly be. The proceedings of the various Legislative Councils and the Indian National Congress and the Muslim League bear ample testimony to the attitude of the educated Indians for the welfare of the masses and their acquaintance with their wants and wishes. The franchise should be widened and extended directly to the people; Mohammedans or Hindus, wherever they are in minority, being given proper and adequate representation having regard to their numerical position.

3. The total number of the members of the Supreme Council should be not less than 150, and of Provincial Councils not less than 100 for the

major Provinces, and not less than 60 to 75 for minor Provinces.

4. The Budget should be passed in the shape of money bills, fiscal autonomy being conceded to India.

5. The Imperial Legislative Council should have power to legislate on, and discuss and pass resolutions relating to, all matters of Indian administration, and the Provincial Councils should have similar powers with regard to Provincial administrations, save and except that the direction of military affairs, of foreign relations, declarations of war, the making of peace, and the entering into treaties, other than commercial, should not be vested in the Government of India. As a safeguard, the Governor-General in Council or the Governor in Council, as the case may be, should have the right of veto, which, however, should be exercised subject to certain conditions and limitations.

6. The Council of the Secretary of State should be abolished. The Secretary of State should, as far as possible, hold, in relation to the Government of India, a position similar to that which the Secretary of State for the Colonies holds in relation to the Colonies. The Secretary of State should be assisted by two permanent Under-Secretaries, one of whom should be an Indian. The salaries of the Secretary and the Under-Secretaries should be placed on the British estimates.

7. In any scheme of Imperial Federation, India should be given through her chosen representatives a place similar to that of the Self-Governing Dominions.

8. The Provincial Governments should be made autonomous, as stated in the Government of India's Despatch, dated 25th August, 1911.

9. The United Provinces, as well as the other major Provinces, should have a Governor brought from the United Kingdom and should have an Executive Council.

10. A full measure of Local Self-Government should be immediately granted.

11. The right to carry arms should be granted to Indians on the same conditions as to Europeans.

12. Indians should be allowed to enlist as volunteers and units of a territorial army established in India.

13. Commissions in the army should be given to Indian youths under conditions similar to those applicable to Europeans,

MANINDRA CHANDRA NANDY OF KASIM-
BAZAR.

D. E. WACHA.

BHUPENDRANATH BASU.

BISHAN DUTT SHUKUL.

MADAN MOHAN MALAVIYA.

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TEJ BAHADUR SAPRU.

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MIR ASAD ALI.

KAMINI KUMAR CHANDA.

KRISHNA SAHAY.

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M. B. DADABHOY.

SITA NATH ROY.

MOHAMED ALI MOHAMED.

M. A. JINNAH.

APPENDIX B

The Congress-League Scheme

The following is the Scheme of Reforms passed as a definite step towards Self-Government, at the 31st Session of the National Congress held at Lucknow on the 29th December, 1916, and also adopted by the All-India Muslim League at its meeting held on the 31st December, 1916.

I. PROVINCIAL LEGISLATIVE COUNCILS

1. Provincial Legislative Councils shall consist of four-fifths elected and of one-fifth nominated members.

2. Their strength shall be not less than 125 members in the Major Provinces, and from 50 to 75 in the Minor Provinces.

3. The members of Councils should be elected directly by people as on broad a franchise as possible.

4. Adequate provision should be made for the representation of important minorities by election, and that the Muhammadans should be represented through special electorates on the Provincial Legislative Councils.

Panjab—One-half of the elected Indian Members.

| | | |
|-------------------------------|---|---|
| United Provinces—30 per cent | „ | „ |
| Bengal—40 per cent | „ | „ |
| Behar—25 per cent | „ | „ |
| Central Provinces—15 per cent | „ | „ |
| Madras—15 per cent | „ | „ |
| Bombay—one-third | „ | „ |

Provided that Muhammadans shall not participate in any of the other elections to the Legislative Councils.

Provided further that no bill, nor any clause thereof, nor a resolution introduced by a non-official member affecting one or the other community, which question is to be determined by the members of that community in the Legislative Council concerned, shall be proceeded with, if three-fourths of the members of that community in the particular Council, Imperial or Provincial, oppose the bill or any clause thereof or the resolution.

5. The head of the Provincial Government should not be the President of the Legislative Council, but the Council should have the right of electing its President.

6. The right of asking supplementary questions should not be restricted to the members putting the original question, but should be allowed to be exercised by any other member.

7. (a) Except Customs, post, telegraph, mint, salt, opium, railways, army and navy, and tributes from Indian States, all other sources of revenue should be provincial.

(b) There should be no divided heads of revenue. The Government of India should be provided with fixed contributions from the Provincial Governments, such fixed contributions being liable to revision when extraordinary and unforeseen contingencies render such revision necessary.

(c) The Provincial Council should have full authority to deal with all matters affecting the internal administration of the Province, including the power to raise loans, to impose and alter taxation, and to vote on the Budget. All items of expenditure, and all proposals concerning ways

and means for raising the necessary revenue should be embodied in Bills and submitted to the Provincial Council for adoption.

(d) Resolutions on all matters within the purview of the Provincial Government should be allowed for discussion in accordance with the rules made in that behalf by the Council itself;

(e) A resolution passed by the Legislative Council shall be binding on the Executive Government, unless vetoed by the Governor in Council, provided, however, that if the resolution is again passed by the Council after an interval of not less than one year, it must be given effect to.

(f) A motion for adjournment may be brought forward for the discussion of a definite matter of urgent public importance, if supported by not less than one-eighth of the members present.

8. Any special meeting of the Council may be summoned on a requisition by not less than one-eighth of the members.

9. A Bill, other than a Money Bill, may be introduced in Council in accordance with the rules made in that behalf by the Council itself and the consent of the Government should not be required therefor.

10. All Bills passed by Provincial Legislatures shall have to receive the assent of the Governor before they become law, but may be vetoed by the Governor-General.

11. The term of office of the members shall be five years.

II. PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENTS

1. The head of every Provincial Government shall be a Governor who shall not ordinarily belong to the Indian Civil Service or any of the permanent services.

2. There shall be in every Province an Executive Council, which, with the Governor, shall constitute the Executive Government of the Province.

3. Members of the Indian Civil Service shall not ordinarily be appointed to the Executive Councils.

4. Not less than one-half of the members of the Executive Council shall consist of Indians to be elected by the elected members of the Provincial Legislative Council.

5. The term of office of the members shall be five years.

III. IMPERIAL LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL

1. The strength of the Imperial Legislative Council shall be 150.

2. Four-fifths of the members shall be elected.

3. The franchise for the Imperial Legislative Council should be widened as far as possible on the lines of the Muhammadan electorates and the elected members of the Provincial Legislative Councils should also form an electorate for the return of Members to the Imperial Legislative Council.

4. The President of the Council shall be elected by the Council itself.

5. The right of asking supplementary questions shall not be restricted to the members putting the original question, but should be allowed to be exercised by any other member.

6. Any special meeting of the Council may be summoned on a requisition by not less than one-eighth of the members.

7. A Bill, other than a Money Bill, may be introduced in Council in accordance with rules made in that behalf by the Council itself, and the

consent of the Executive Government should not be required therefor.

8. All Bills passed by the Council shall have to receive the assent of the Governor-General before they become law.

9. All financial proposals relating to sources of income and items of expenditure shall be embodied in Bills. Every such Bill and the Budget as a whole shall be submitted for the vote of the Imperial Legislative Council.

10. The term of office of members shall be five years.

11. The matters mentioned hereinbelow shall be exclusively under the control of the Imperial Legislative Council :

(a) Matters in regard to which uniform Legislation for the whole of India is desirable ;

(b) Provincial legislation in so far as it may affect inter-provincial fiscal relations ;

(c) Questions affecting purely Imperial revenue, excepting tributes from Indian States ;

(d) Questions affecting purely Imperial expenditure, except that no resolution of the Imperial Legislative Council shall be binding on the Governor-General in Council in respect of Military charges for the defence of the country ;

(e) The right of revising Indian tariffs and customs duties, of imposing, altering or removing any tax or cess, modifying the existing system of currency and banking, and granting any aids or bounties to any or all deserving and nascent industries of the country ; and

(f) Resolutions on all matters relating to the administration of the country as a whole ;

12. A resolution passed by the Legislative Council should be binding on the Executive Government, unless vetoed by the Governor-General in Council provided, however, that if the

Resolution is again passed by the Council after an interval of not less than one year, it must be given effect to.

13. A motion for adjournment may be brought forward for the discussion of a definite matter of urgent public importance, if supported by not less than one-eighth of the members present.

14. The Crown may exercise its power of veto in regard to a Bill passed by a Provincial Legislative Council or by the Imperial Legislative Council within twelve months from the date on which it is passed, and the Bill shall cease to have effect as from the date on which the fact of such veto is made known to the Legislative Council concerned.

15. The Imperial Legislative Council shall have no power to interfere with the Government of India's direction of the military affairs and the foreign political relations of India, including the declaration of war, the making of peace and the entering into treaties.

IV THE GOVERNMENT OF INDIA

1. The Governor-General of India will be the head of the Government of India.

2. He will have an Executive Council, half of whom shall be Indians.

3. The Indian members should be elected by the elected members of the Imperial Legislative Council.

4. Members of the Indian Civil Service shall not ordinarily be appointed to the Executive Council of the Governor-General.

5. The power of making all appointments in the Imperial Civil Services shall vest in the Government of India as constituted under this scheme, and subject to any laws that may be made by the Imperial Legislative Council.

6. The Government of India shall not ordinarily interfere in the local affairs of Province, and powers not specifically given to a Provincial Government shall be deemed to be vested in the former. The authority of the Government of India will ordinarily be limited to general supervision and superintendence over the Provincial Governments.

7. In Legislative and administrative matters the Government of India, as constituted under this scheme, shall, as far as possible, be independent of the Secretary of State.

8. A system of independent audit of the accounts of the Government of India should be instituted.

V. THE SECRETARY OF STATE IN COUNCIL

1. The Council of the Secretary of State for India should be abolished.

2. The salary of the Secretary of State should be placed on the British estimates.

3. The Secretary of State should, as far as possible, occupy the same position in relation to the Government of India as the Secretary of State for the Colonies in relation to the Governments of the Self-Governing Dominions.

4. The Secretary of State for India should be assisted by two permanent Under-Secretaries, one of whom should always be an Indian.

VI. MILITARY AND OTHER MATTERS OF POLICY.

1. The military and naval services of His Majesty, both in their commissioned and non-commissioned ranks, should be thrown open to Indians

and adequate provision should be made for their selection, training and instruction in India.

2. Indians should be allowed to enlist as volunteers.

3. Indians should be placed on a footing of equality in respect of status and rights of citizenship with other subjects of His Majesty the King throughout the Empire.

4. The Executive Officers in India shall have no judicial powers entrusted to them and the judiciary in every Province shall be placed under the highest Court of that Province.

APPENDIX C

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